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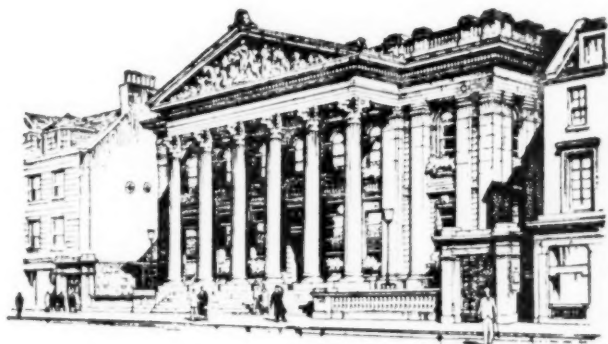
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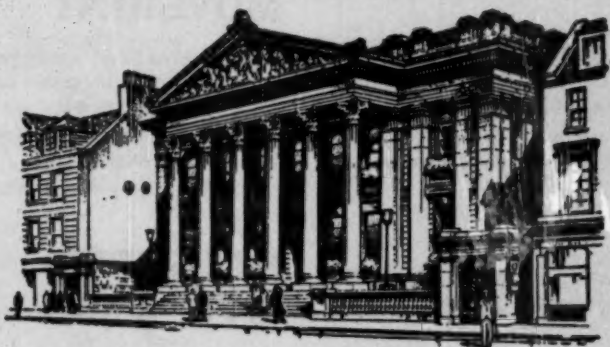
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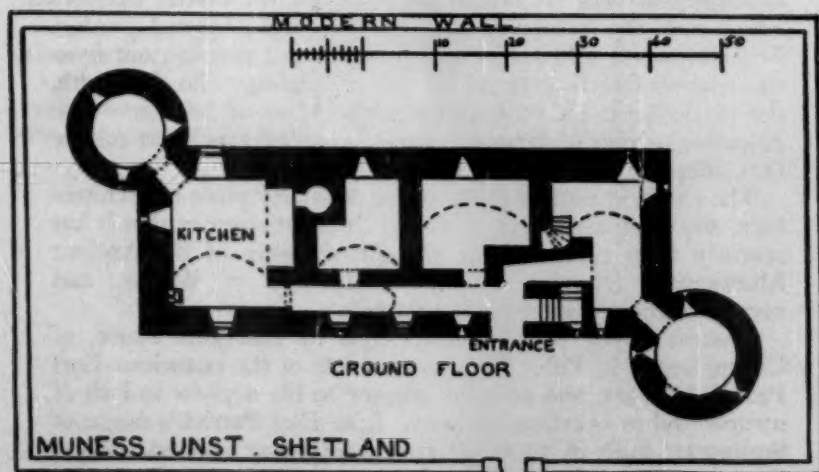
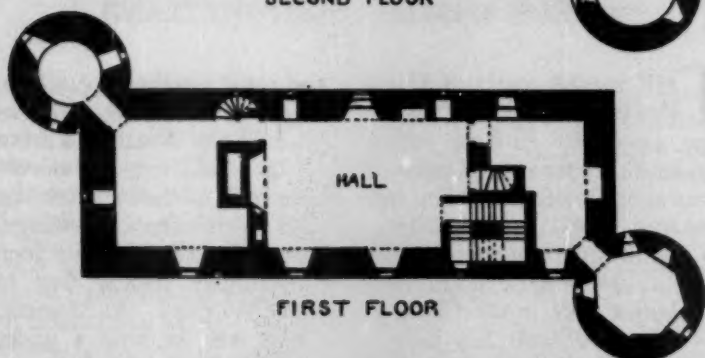
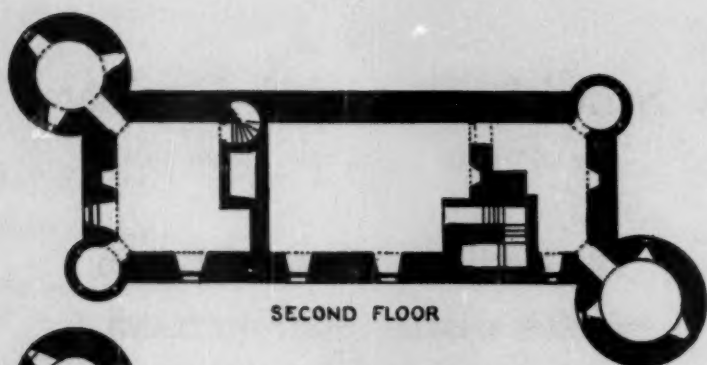
The Northmost Castle of Britain

MUNESS CASTLE, UNST, SHETLAND

THE ruined castle of Muness, the most northerly castle in the British Islands, stands upon a low schistose promontory, tipped by gabbro, jutting forth into the North Sea from the south-eastern extremity of the island of Unst, the northmost of the Shetlands. The structure is built of the local schists, serpentines and gabbro, with imported red freestone dressings. Its position, at one corner of its island above a fresh water loch and overlooking a little harbour, curiously recalls that of Noltland Castle in the Orkney island of Westray. At Muness, however, the loch has long been dry, and is now a wide, shallow peat-bed. It lay to the south of the castle, between which and the former loch are traces of a terraced garden. Foundations of a barmkin wall may be seen running out from the south-western angle of the main building. To the north, the castle commands its harbour, the Ham of Muness. The adjoining group of farm buildings is called Castleton on the O.S. Map, but the name is not now current.

The castle is a most finished and scholarly piece of architecture, and the planning is masterly. It is satisfactory that it has recently been placed under the guardianship of the Ancient Monuments Division of H.M. Ministry of Works, and necessary repairs are now in progress.

Muness Castle was begun in 1598 by Lawrence Bruce, of Culmalindie, in Fife. He was an uncle of the notorious Earl Patrick Stewart, and no whit inferior to his nephew in lack of scruple and in heartless tyranny. Like Earl Patrick's castle of Scalloway, built in 1600, Muness Castle was erected, almost literally, out of the sweat and tears of the Shetlanders, over whom his dual office as Great Foud and Admiral-depute gave



him vast and irresponsible power.¹ In the time of his son, Andrew Bruce, the castle was plundered and burnt, in August 1627, by a privateer from Dunkirk.² Mr A. T. Cluness, author of the admirable volume on *The Shetland Isles* in the County Book series, remembers an old woman who recalled her father telling her of burnt timber ends remaining in the joist holes. It was probably this disaster that gave rise to the legend of the burning of the castle by Hakki of Dikeram, a poem long preserved in the old Norn language of Shetland. Another Norse legend associated with the castle recalls the tragic fortunes of Helga, daughter of a udaller in Unst, whom the laird of Muness abducted, after slaying the girl's father. 'She made her escape from an upper room of the castle by making a rope of torn sheets, and joined her lover who was waiting outside in the darkness of a stormy night. They crossed the island, and set sail in a little boat during the storm, and so vanished for ever from men's sight.'³

Muness Castle consists of an oblong central building, lying east and west,⁴ at each of two diagonally opposite corners of which, north-west and south-east, a large round tower, very boldly projected, is attached. Each tower by its gunloops commands two sides of the central building, while the latter in its turn covers the towers—so that it is impossible to approach the castle from any quarter without coming under fire. This is the famous Scottish 'three-stepped' or Z-type of castle. By the ingenious and canny device of echeloning them at diagonally opposite corners, two towers are made to do the work of four in flanking all four sides of the castle. Moreover, at the two free angles of the main building, north-east and south-west, hanging turrets are corbelled out at second floor level, well furnished with gunloops to complete the flanking defence; so that every line of approach to the castle is brought under full control.

The main building measures 74 feet by 26 feet 6 inches, over walls 4 or 5 feet thick in the basement. The north-west tower is 17 feet, and the south-east tower 18 feet in diameter. Their walls are slightly less thick than those of the main building.

¹ For particulars of his career and family see Gilbert Goudie, *Antiquities of Shetland*, 200-3, 210.

² See *Reg. Privy Council*, Second Series, iv, 84.

³ For these Muness Legends see A.T. Cluness, *The Shetland Isles*, 195.

⁴ At least, so I have assumed for simplicity in description. In fact the axis of the castle lies N. W. and S. E.

The basement is vaulted throughout, and above this are two unvaulted floors, over which there was a garret storey partly in the roof; but this, with the two gables and the upper portions of the towers and turrets, was all removed many years ago—it was said to provide materials for the wall that now encloses the castle!

The entrance to the castle is in the south front, about 15 feet from the south-east tower. It admits to a corridor that runs westward along the main building, giving access first to a couple of cellars, and finally to the kitchen at the west end. Thus the two cellars are reduced in size by the corridor. The second cellar is still further curtailed by a rectangular projection housing the kitchen oven, while the first cellar is similarly intruded upon by a projection forming part of the main staircase of the castle. The kitchen alone is therefore of the full width of the central building. It is a spacious apartment, measuring 18 feet by 13 feet, with a cavernous arched fireplace in the east wall, the oven aforesaid inside it to the north, and a slop drain at the south-west corner. Lighting is furnished by a sizeable window in the north wall and a lesser window opposite. These are the only two large openings at ground floor level in the castle. The kitchen has also a loophole in the west gable.

From the kitchen a door leads through to a circular cellar in the north-western round tower. This will have been the larder. Its only light is furnished by three loopholes.

Each of the two cellars east of the kitchen is lit merely by a narrow loop to the north. The corridor has three such loops.

On the other side of the entrance two doors are found, one in front and one on the right hand. The latter gives access to the main stair, while the former conducts, by a skewed passage under the stair, through to the eastmost cellar of the main building. This had been the buttery or wine cellar, and has the usual service stair to the hall above. The wine cellar is lit by two loopholes in the north-west corner and a third in the south wall. Owing to the intrusion of the staircase, this cellar, like the other two, is L-shaped. From it a door leads to a fourth cellar in the south-east tower, circular in plan and lit by four loopholes.

The main stair, 3 feet wide, is of the scale-and-platt variety. It ascends to the summit of the building, forming at all levels a rectangular projection into the rooms on either hand. It is lit by a loophole on the first and fourth landings. At its north-east

corner, the service stair forms a further projection into the eastern rooms.

On the first floor we find the great hall in the centre of the main building, with a private room at either end. The hall measures 28 feet in length by 18 feet in breadth, less the staircase projection at its south-east corner. It is well lit by two large windows on the south side and a single one on the north. In the west gable is the fireplace, and in the north wall is a buffet-recess. In this wall there are also, besides the window mentioned, two aumbries with loopholes below. The fireplace has a 'salt-cellar' in the south ingo, and beside this there is an aumbry, gible-checked for a wooden frame and door.

From the hall a door leads westward into the lord's private room. Its fireplace was in the west gable,¹ and the room will also have been heated by the kitchen 'lum', which forms a large breast or projection on the opposite wide. The private room is lit by a window in the south wall. At the north-west corner a door leads through to a circular chamber in the round tower. This chamber has no fireplace. It was lit by three small windows with gunloops underneath.

From the north-east corner of the private room a newel stair in the thickness of the north wall leads up to the remaining rooms of the lord's private suite in the storey above.

At the eastern end of the hall is a similar pair of apartments, a living room in the main building and a chamber in the south-east tower. The living room has a window on each side, north and south, and a fireplace in the east gable. Its shape is irregular, due to the intrusion of the main staircase and its attendant projection containing the service stair. The chamber in the south-east tower is of octagonal form. It has a fireplace and three small windows, which had gunloops in their breasts.

On the upper floor the arrangement has been very similar to that just described. In the centre is the withdrawing room, lit by two windows on the south side, and having a fireplace, curiously small, in the east gable. Owing to the ruinous state of the castle at this level, it is uncertain what, if any, windows there may have been in the north wall. At the north-east

¹ The dressed stonework of this fireplace is torn out, and in the survey by Dr Thomas Ross, reproduced herewith, it is wrongly shown as a loophole. The plan by the Ancient Monuments Commission shows it correctly as a fireplace. Dr Ross's survey (D. MacGibbon and T. Ross, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, ii, 287-8) is the only one meantime available which gives the second floor.

corner a door admits to a suite of rooms, one in the east end of the main building and the second in the south-east tower. The former has a single window in the south wall and a fireplace in the east gable. The tower chamber, circular in plan, has three small windows, but no fireplace.

The corresponding pair of rooms at the west end of the withdrawing room have no entrance at this level. They are reached only by the mural stair from the lord's private room below. The apartment in the main building has a window in the south wall and a second in the west gable, where also is the fireplace. The tower room is circular and has three small windows. There is no fireplace. On this second floor level there are also two 'studies' or small circular closets in the hanging turrets. Each has been lit by three small windows.

Upon a general view of Muness Castle, as thus described, we are struck with the sheer mastery of design revealed by the little building. Evidently it exactly met the owner's requirements, both in accommodation and in defence: and the way in which a due balance has been struck between these conflicting needs must impress every thoughtful student of this fascinating castle. Of course the Z-plan is motivated mainly by defence; and most noteworthy is the way in which, so as not to impede the full flanking power of the echeloned round towers, the square staircase of the castle has been confined within the central building, instead of being set forth in a projecting 'jamb', as was so often done elsewhere. True, the insertion of a scale-and-platt stair in the long rectangular 'hall-house' was not without its difficulties, and a certain awkwardness in the handling of this problem is apparent. Nevertheless the solution has been masterly. Even more significant is the thoughtful care that has been taken to secure the lord's own privacy, indeed his safety. From his private room, off the great hall, is the only access to his 'family quarters'. Moreover, it is certain that the solid wall which divides the withdrawing room from the family apartments must have risen through the roof as an intermediate gable, crowned by the kitchen chimney. The diaphragm wall so produced, sundering the servants' quarters in the garret from the family rooms to the westward, will have been a great safeguard against fire.

Equally clever is the way in which the guest apartments at the opposite end are separated from the 'stour' of the hall by the main stair and its associated walling, so that the peace and



Photographs by courtesy, Ministry of Works

Above: Muness Castle from W.

Below: Muness Castle from N.



Photograph by courtesy, Ministry of Works

Muness Castle: panels over doorway

quiet of the guests were as far as possible assured. The rooms of the little building, public and private, are, for its scale, ample, well proportioned and handsomely appointed. The fenestration is excellently considered; and the towers, being echeloned to the main building, interfere as little as possible with the lighting of the latter, and *vice versa*. To sum up: Muness Castle conforms to the canon of good planning—the container must be equal to the contained, the available area filled full, without waste space and without overcrowding.

The architectural details of the castle are extremely finished and dainty. Some of the vertical loopholes have a pleasing little head in the form of a shallow recessed pediment, with incurved sides. In some of the window breasts are quatrefoiled gunloops, and openings of this design, with others forming plain circular orifices, ringed around, are found on the north front. The tower windows are of a square shape, with sunk labels on each side, so as to produce a quatrefoil outline. The gunloops in the window breasts of the south-east tower are slightly plunged. The basal gunloops are either horizontally splayed openings with bevelled ends, or doublets, the openings divergent. The turret windows have delicately moulded architraves, having a quirked edge roll and cavetto. The corbelling of the turrets consists of two rows of chequer-pattern corbels superimposed on three continuous courses; the former have dummy gunloops, with shallow projected discs or rosettes as ornament. A projecting disc, or perhaps a shield, on the east side of the south-west turret, exhibits some weathered carving, stated to have been the initials of Andrew Bruce, the second laird. The principal windows have chamfered or bull-nosed margins, are grooved for glass in the upper half and provided for shutters in the lower half; and all have been barred.

The entrance to the castle is now represented only by a gap in the masonry: but the architrave (fluted jambs and lintel) from the door was removed and re-used at the House of Lund, where it still remains. The House of Lund itself is now in ruins, and it is to be hoped that it will be found possible to bring the door back to Muness. Over the entrance is the coat of arms of Lawrence Bruce, as follows: quarterly, 1st and 4th, a saltire (the chief in this case omitted); 2nd and 3rd, a lion rampant. The shield is flanked by the initials L. B. Above and below are scrolls, doubtless once inscribed or painted with mottos: but

all this carved heraldic work is now greatly weathered. By contrast, the horizontal panel below, with its delightful inscription in florid Gothic lettering, is still clearly legible:

LIST ZE TO KNAW YIS BULDING QUHA BEGAN
LAURENCE THE BRUCE HE WAS THAT WORTHY MAN
QUHA ERNESTLY HIS AIRIS AND OFSPRING PRAYIS
TO HELP AND NOT TO HURT THIS VARK ALUAYIS.

Under this in Roman capitals is the date THE ZEIR OF GOD 1598. It will be noticed that Lawrence claims only to have begun the building; and that it was completed by his son Andrew is confirmed by the latter's initials formerly visible on the south-west turret, as well as by the armorial door-knocker and oaken panel to be noticed below.

Internally, the arches of the vaulting, and the relieving arch over the hall fireplace, are incorrectly radiated, after the ancient North Isles manner.¹ A bench for the centring is left at the vault-springs. The vaults in the main building are generally of a flattish section, and in the towers the dome vaults are shallow inverted saucers. Pieces of a deep red brick are found in the grouted hearting of the walls. Probably this will be Flemish brick, brought thither as ballast. In the hall and elsewhere, portions of the thick and hard grey plaster still adhere to the walls.

Preserved on the front door of Sand Lodge, the residence of Mr R. H. Bruce of Sumburgh, is the ancient door-knocker of Muness Castle. It is in bronze, and the striking plate displays the arms of Bruce and Gray—Lawrence Bruce had married a daughter of Lord Gray—with the name Andro Brus, and the motto OMNIA FINCIT [*sic*] AMOR. The striker is fashioned as a dolphin. Such ancient door-knockers are extremely rare in Scotland. Probably this one is safer at Sand Lodge, but it is to be hoped that a replica will be secured for the new door at Muness. In the National Museum of Antiquities is a fine carved oak panel from Muness, displaying the arms of Bruce quartered with Gray, and the motto OMNIA VIN [CIT AMOR].²

In other writings³ I have pointed out that the remarkable

¹ See *The Kirkwall Charters* (Third Spalding Club), 151.

² For the door-knocker see *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, xv, 101-3; and for the oak panel, *Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, Shetland*, 131.

³ See *The Kirkwall Charters*, ut cit., 131-57; *The Viking Congress, Lerwick 1960* (Aberdeen Univ. Studies, No. 131), 175-83.

group of castellated edifices, *c.* 1600, in the Northern Isles—Earl Patrick's Palace at Kirkwall, his addition to the Episcopal Palace there, his remodelling of Noltland Castle in Westray, his castle of Scalloway in Shetland, and Muness Castle built by his henchman Lawrence Bruce—all are obviously the work of the same master mason or architect, and that he was probably Andrew Crawford, 'maister of vark to the Earl of Orkney', whose tombstone remains in Tingwall Churchyard. At that time there is much evidence that the term master of work had come to be used to signify what we mean by a practising architect. Almost nothing is otherwise known of Andrew Crawford: but if he was indeed the deviser of this group of scholarly and cultured buildings, then surely he must take his place as one of the greatest of Scottish architects.

W. DOUGLAS SIMPSON.¹

¹ Librarian, University of Aberdeen.

William Dunbar¹

THIS selection of Dunbar's poems is the second volume of the new Clarendon Mediaeval and Tudor Series, the general editor of which is Dr J. A. W. Bennett. The wrapper claims that 'the volumes should be as helpful to the ordinary reader as to the university student', but to justify that claim editors will have to be allowed more scope than Professor James Kinsley has apparently had in the present issue. The general reader, historian or other, needs much more help from commentary and glossary than is offered here; the university student should have before him a competent apparatus criticus, at least for the more important variants and *crucies*; I desiderate also, as a practitioner of ecdotics in another field, that of Classical scholarship, an adequate evaluation of the early printed and manuscript sources for the too often dubious text of this major poet.

General readers may not have ready access to the Scottish Text Society's three-volume edition of Dunbar (hereafter cited as *STS*), or to the one-volume texts by H. B. Baildon and W. M. Mackenzie, or to the massive lexica relevant to the poet's languages, including the as yet far from complete Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (hereafter cited as *DOST*). Therefore the glossary and notes of such a selection as this should err on the side of abundance, not of dearth. I illustrate this point by a few examples, using Professor Kinsley's poem and line references. In passing I mention that, in *The Tretis of the tua mariit Wemen and the Wedo* and other pieces of which he offers only excerpts, he affixes a new numeration to his abridgements and applies his notes to that new numeration, which is a nuisance for anyone who consults the Kinsley commentary while reading a full text in another edition.

At 2, 11 Judas, with many a Jew, took Jesus 'And schot him furth with mony ane schow'. Looking in the glossary under

¹ *William Dunbar: Poems*. Ed. by James Kinsley. Pp. xxviii, 160. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press. 1958. 12s. 6d.

schot, one finds only the gloss 'shooting'. Is that what it means here? Clearly not. What, then? Is the general reader to take it as 'shot' or as 'shoved'? *STS* and Baillon gloss *schot furth* as 'pushed violently'.

At 6, 5 we read: 'He nottit is thy name of nobilness'. The glossary gives *he* as a form of 'high', and *note* in the sense 'make use of'; but omits *nottit*. *STS* explains it as 'noted, famous'. At 10, 23 can the general reader with no help grasp that 'I dar lay' means 'I dare wager; I'd bet you'?

At 10, 82 we read: 'This he was banist and gat a blek'. The glossary under *blek* gives only 'leather blacking', an absurd sense here. Mackenzie gives nothing. *STS* and Baillon give a second sense, 'a black mark'. *DOST* adds the explanations, 'a spot or stain'.

At 11, 32 we ought to be told, as by *STS*, that *secund* means 'secondary'. At 12, 9 the phrase 'dirkin efter mirthis' is left baffling. At 13, 61 a slightly different concrete sense of *myrthis* is left to the university student's imagination. At 17, 17 there is no gloss on *wyld*, and the note fails to explain that it means 'combed, dressed'. At 32, 71 *singular* should be explained as 'individual'.

At 8, 14 'The nycht be fain faucht in hir querrell' is left for the general reader to solve without comment. Under *fecht* in the glossary he will find *faucht* as past tense; and under *fain* he reads 'willing(ly), glad(ly)'. *DOST*, however, gives *fain* here as a noun, following *STS*, which glosses *be fain* 'by will, willingly', and explains the line as 'the night willingly fought in her quarrell'. Baillon interprets it differently: 'the night would fain be fought in her quarrell'. *STS* detects a pun: 'Night, because she was black, fought for her, and the king fought as her knight.' The silences of Dr Mackenzie and Professor Kinsley about this difficulty remind me of that epigram by the Revd. Edward Young—

How commentators each dark passage shun,
And hold their farthing candle to the sun!

That second line, however, does not apply to what there is of Professor Kinsley's commentary, which, so far as it goes, is apt and sound. Only, if we are general readers or university students, we want, as in the matter of the landlady's porridge, more of it.

Another place where one is at a loss for explanation is 33, 26:

'Thir twa out of ane scopin stowp / Tha drank thre quartis, soup and soup. . . .' Again no comment ad loc., but the glossary tells us a *scopin* is a 'half-pint'. How does one drink three *quartis* out of a half-pint flagon? University students can embarrass their Professor by enquiring, but what is the general reader to do? Consult Mackenzie, who prints: 'Off wyne owt of ane choppyne stowp, / They drank twa quartis, sowp and sowp. . . .' Note the variants. Mackenzie helps by telling us that a *chopin* was half a Scots pint or $1\frac{1}{2}$ imperial pints. Even then, how drink even two *quartis* from $1\frac{1}{2}$ imperial pints? Baildon gives no help, except that *sowp* and *sowp* means 'turn about'. Reach for *STS*, and read: 'Off wyne owt of ane choppyne stowp, / They drank twa quartis, sowp and sowp. . . .', with a note in the apparatus that the Maitland and Reidpeth manuscripts offer 'Thir twa' for 'Off wyne' and 'thr(i)e' for 'twa' *quartis*. But no comment explains the problem of liquid measures involved. Did they keep refilling the *stowp*? And, if so, how often? Now note further that Professor Kinsley has here, at 33,26, disfavoured the Bannatyne manuscript, though elsewhere he founds on the authority of that same Bannatyne MS, notably in the ascription to Dunbar of no. 30, which Laing and Mackenzie ascribe to Sir James Inglis on the authority of the Maitland MS. Baildon swithers (p. 279), but finds the rhyme-scheme and rhythm different from anything in Dunbar. Professor Kinsley remarks: 'Due weight must be given to the ascription in the earlier MS.' But the Bannatyne MS is only a few years earlier than the Maitland, and both MSS are a good generation later than the poet's lifetime. It is, in general, more likely that a poem by a less known poet, Inglis, should be ascribed to a more famous one, Dunbar, than that the reverse should occur. In future issues this piece, no. 30, ought to be placed at the end, with nos. 45 and 46, among 'poems of uncertain authorship'. Indeed, when the scope of the volume allows space for only about half of Dunbar's works, it might be better to omit all doubtful items, however meritorious.

At 6, 47 we read of four and twenty maidens that 'Did meit the quein, hir husband reverentlie', where 'husband' makes no sense and is emended to 'saluand'. How does *salu* become corrupted to *hush* in any kind of Scots writing or printing? Surely an emendation can be made that involves less palaeographical improbability. To me occur 'hir *buskand*' (comporting

themselves), and 'hir *huschand*' (ushering her), but specialists will doubtless hit the nail more squarely if they take a good look at it. Incidentally, this particular set of *vers d'occasion* has contents of interest to historians, and may have been worthy of Queen Margaret, but poetically it is hardly worthy of Dunbar; its final stanza recalls strongly Sir William Topaz McGonagall, Knight of the White Elephant of Burma.

At 32, 77 Kinsley follows Mackenzie in printing the lacunose line: 'For to [] yow guid name.' Yet he makes no comment at all, though Mackenzie (p. 215) had at least told us of Laing's supplement 'reconqueis' and Small's 'win back to', only to reject them. At many points one has the impression that Kinsley has simply followed Mackenzie, sometimes with a certain haste and carelessness, but at other times giving us scholarly insights, for which one hopes he will have more scope in a re-issue. At 43, 30 we read the line: 'For evill schoud strae that I reiv wald.' The glossary under *schoud* merely comments (*obscure*). Here again Kinsley seems to follow Mackenzie. But STS and Baildon print 'evill schom strae', and tell us *schom* means 'shorn', which I do not reject as an explanation.

There are some places where the original sources seem indubitably defective, and editors have resorted to conjectural supplements or emendations. For example, at 6, 37, in a description of a civic pageant to welcome Queen Margaret at Aberdeen, there is the defective sentence, 'The [] syne of great renoun / Thow gart upspring, with branches new and greine. . . .' Kinsley prints the supplement [*nobill Stewarts*], suggested by Laing and adopted by STS and Mackenzie. Baildon prints it, but comments that 'some figurative expression is wanted to fit in with "*upspring with branches new and green*".' I agree, and suggest the supplement [*stok of Stewartis*], referring to a construction representing a family-tree, which one could contrive to appear to spring up on a cart in the procession, with portraits or medallions of Stewart kings flourishing on successive green branches. The day for conjectures in Dunbar is by no means past, and an editor should print the more plausible ones in his apparatus, along with variants from the printed and manuscript sources.

At 9,4 we have a line that does not scan: 'And everie vertew that is deir.' Kinsley prints Laing's proposal, '... that is [held maist] deir'. Some may prefer Pinkerton's supplement,

'... that [to hevin] is deir'. At 6, 3 we read, 'Unto the heaven [ascendit] thy renoun is', but Baidon, with some justice, prefers Schipper's proposal [*upheyt*], for the sake of the alliteration.

At 39, 10 Kinsley prints 'Chevalouris, cawandaris, and flingar is...', and glosses *cawandar* as (*obscure*), following Mackenzie. STS and Baidon print *callandaris*, explained as 'cloth-pressers' or as 'keepers of records of events'. In the context, where the poet catalogues the swarm of miscellaneous types at Court, no close relevance is needed in the meaning. Kinsley, with Mackenzie, fails to gloss *Chevalouris*, which STS takes as 'men-at-arms of whatever kind' (Fr. *chevaliers*). *Flingaris* are dancers, of Highland flings or the like. I suspect *callandaris*, if that is the true reading, could mean men who play the gallant or callant.

At 42, 18 the general reader will look for a note on the line, 'My bekis ar spruning he and bald', and will find none. He will not even find the title of the poem as in other editions, *The Petition of the Gray Horse, Auld Dunbar*, which gives the clue to the line. In the glossary one finds *bekis*,² *teeth*, exactly as in Mackenzie. STS and Baidon give *beikis* as 'corner teeth'. The old horse's corner teeth are sticking out like beaks.

At 5, 67 the line 'And that no schouris nor blastis cawld' has long been felt defective, especially in a metrician usually so competent as Dunbar. Laing proposed to insert 'snell' after 'schouris'. Schipper suggested 'scharp'. Following Mackenzie, Kinsley leaves us ignorant of these not unpalatable emendations.

At 5, 119 there is a reference to the lion rampant gules of the Kings of Scots, 'Quhois noble yre is *parcere prostratis*'. STS finds the reading of the Bannatyne MS, our sole authority, to be '... is proceir prostratis', but suggests that 'proceir' may be a miswriting for 'proteir', which it glosses 'able to protect' (from Fr. *protéger*). That is not acceptable, and a change from *proceir* to *parcere* is well supported by citation of a Latin motto associated in 1455 with the Scots royal arms: *Parcere prostratis scit nobilis ira leonis*. Now *yre* can hardly be anything but Latin *ira*, wrath, rage; and it makes no sense, even in macaronics, to say 'whose noble rage is to spare those who submit'. The acceptable change to *parcere* involves emending the letters *is* also. Maybe we should simply read the Latin verb of the motto, *scit*. But perhaps there was a Middle Scots form *wis*, meaning 'knows' (German *weiss*). That is the sort

of point the determination of which is hampered by the slow progress of our national lexicography.

Professor Kinsley does not wholly eschew emendation of his own. For instance, at 10, 38, '“Quhat is he yone that methis us neir?”', though he has no note in his commentary, in his glossary at *methis* he suggests the emendation *nechis*, 'draws near'. Mackenzie glosses *methis* as 'neighbour', with Baildon and *STS*. Jamieson-Metcalf, under *Myla*, give tolerably close parallels for the sense 'show up', rather like the common *Kythe*.

At 30, 22 we read of 'naturall fulis / That bettir accordis to play thame at the trulis . . .', where *trulis* is glossed '? bowls', as by Mackenzie. Bowls struck me as too sedate a game for the context, and *STS* supplies a better explanation (III, 143), by reference to a Danish team-game, apparently of some violence, rather like, I would suggest, the contests of *Uppies* and *Doonies* in Orkney and Roxburghshire (see the Scottish National Dictionary (*SND*) under *Doonie*).

Recourse to Baildon or *STS* will at many points serve the general reader better than reliance on the glossaries of Kinsley and Mackenzie, e.g. in no. 13, where comic terms like *mychane*, *hurle bawsy*, *slawsy*, *brylyoun*, *tyrlie myrlie*, are left more obscure than is really necessary. It may be remarked in passing that *DOST* tends to be less venturesome than *SND* in proffering tentative explanations of rare words about which no certainty is possible. Sometimes Kinsley's glossary fails to make a quick point that would interest those for whom the volume is intended, e.g. under *terand*, which is a form of *tyrant*; *kirsp*, which is not just 'a delicate fabric' but etymologically one with *crêpe*; *warlo*, which is *warlock*; *gyse*, which is *guise*; *tryackill*, a Greek derivative which means indeed 'medicine for venomous bites and malignant diseases', but is also *treacle*. *Skyre* at 34, 50 could well be 'a hard swelling, tumour' (Latin *scirrhus*, from Greek). At 18, 35 *rak* might be 'volley, series' rather than 'crack'.

Spellings are for the most part conservative, and rightly so, with little modernisation, mainly in *u*, *v*, *w*. One can be fairly sure some spellings are wrong, e.g. *caild*, which *DOST* does not list as a spelling of *ca(u)ld*. With others one remains doubtful: e.g. *prattellie*, at 6, 51, glossed as 'prettily', could well mean 'cunningly, cleverly', from *pratt*, 'a trick'. At 2, 62 *pietie*, meaning pity, would be more helpfully spelt *petie*.

Punctuations are editorial. At 40, 27 the colon might be better made into a comma. Misprints I noted were few: at 39, 50 *than* for *that*; in the note on 2, 7 read *virginali*. I could wish that more compound words were written *junctim*, as *upskip*, *upspred*, *ourhelit*, *supere.xpendit*, *neirhand*; or hyphenated, as *tute-mowitt*, *belly-huddroun*, *ostir-dregar*, *clarat-cunnaris*, *meit-revaris*.

Leaving these necessary pedantries, *paulo maiora canamus*. As a literary historian and critic Professor Kinsley had already shown his powers in the first chapter of a collective survey edited by him, *Scottish Poetry* (1955). Compared with the well-balanced account he gave there, his nine brief pages of introduction to this selection show some differences of emphasis and perspective, not all of which commend themselves. For example, the general reader and the university student may be misled by the initial statement that Dunbar's 'poetic inheritance was the courtly tradition of medieval France and England'. In the first paragraph of his 1955 essay Professor Kinsley emphasised that 'the richness and variety of Dunbar's own verse suggest a fertile Scots tradition as well as the impact of Chaucer's genius on a receptive mind'. He noted there also that John Barbour, a century before, 'has the assurance and versatility of a poet working in an established tradition'. Now that established tradition, in the Scots form of Northern Insular West Teutonic—Northern Anglic, if that is preferred—owes much, of course, to medieval Latin and French and English traditions; but it owes something also to the Gaelic background of Scotland, something which eludes precise assessment. Even in Dunbar's days at Court, James IV was continually paying Gaelic-speakers for poetry-recitals. Dr Kurt Wittig, in his highly laudable book, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (p. 61), observes that 'Dunbar evidently had Celtic blood in his veins, with not a little of the Gaelic temperament, and his own genius has a recognisable affinity with the spirit of Celtic poetry'. In commenting on Dunbar's flyting with Kennedy (p. 128) Professor Kinsley notes that 'the relation of early Scots flyting to medieval bardic contests in Gaelic verse has yet to be worked out'; and he elsewhere (p. xiii) acknowledges that Dunbar can hardly be called a disciple of Chaucer, much less of Gower and Lydgate, those 'English agents for the import of continental literature', and that Dunbar's 'vitality and freshness, as well as his confident

handling of themes uncommon in Middle English, suggest a vigorous native tradition in Scots'. Quite so: therefore it is misleading to lay down initially that Dunbar's 'poetic inheritance was the courtly tradition of medieval France and England'.

French and English traditions were certainly parts of Dunbar's poetic inheritance, but not the earliest parts, and perhaps not the most important parts in his formative years. Latin, after all, was Dunbar's first foreign language, and the backbone of his education. In Dunbar's time a Latin Renaissance was in full swing. The pope who founded the Vatican Library gave Glasgow University its foundation bull. I see no point in writing down Dunbar's so-called 'aureate' diction as a debt to English poetry, for to do so ignores the whole spirit of that Latinist neo-classicism which was then pervading Scotland as the core of humaner studies. It is an odd reminder of that atmosphere that the official residence of the holder of the Latin chair at Aberdeen is 'The Humanity Manse'. This Latinist enthusiasm was to culminate in George Buchanan, the greatest master of Latinity that ever existed, if one estimates both verse and prose together: for Buchanan's verse is better than Cicero's, and his prose than Seneca's. How far the Scots intelligentsia, clerical and lay, were directly influenced by the Humanism based on Italy is hard to say: Professor Kinsley remarks on the young Archbishop of St. Andrews having had Erasmus for his tutor. They toured Italy together. Erasmus's friend Janus Lascaris, leading promotor of Greek studies in his age, sometime Professor of Greek at Florence, later French Ambassador to Venice, remarked on the zeal of Scotsmen for classical learning; and there is no reason for regarding Chaucer's classicising influence as more than a reinforcement of an international movement in which Scotland was by no means backward.

There is another influence, which I cannot assess, but suspect, that of the Flemings. Among the appreciations which Professor Kinsley quotes, from John Pinkerton, J. M. Ross, Agnes Mure Mackenzie, W. L. Renwick, and C. S. Lewis, I noted particularly a phrase of Professor Renwick's, that Dunbar was 'painter by turns in the school of Hieronymus Bosch and Holbein'. Pinkerton is cited too (p. 128) for the judgment that the poem *Airlie on As Wodnisday* is 'a curious picture from the life, in the style of Flemish painting'. It is for consideration whether we have not tended to make too much of

French influence in Dunbar's age, and too little of Flemish. When he was a student at St. Andrews, and went down to the taverns by the harbour—as I did in my own day—were there not Flemish sailors roistering and singing in a language as close to Scots as was Chaucer's English? And was not the Flemish imagination very prominently represented then in Scotland in painting, furniture, interior decoration generally, and in music, notably in the Chapel Royal? Among many other international influences, *bien entendu*. Consider the Court's personal connections. James II's wife was Mary of Guelders; his sister Margaret had married the future Louis XII of France; Isabella became Duchess of Brittany, Eleanor Archduchess of Tirol; Mary married a Flemish nobleman who was lord of Campvere; Annabella was divorced successively by a son of the Duke of Savoy and by an Earl of Huntly, leading magnate in the north-east of Scotland; while Jean married a Douglas, Earl of Morton, of the clan dominant in the south-west. James III married a Princess of Denmark. There we have a fair sample of the international and regional influences fused in the cosmopolitan Scots Court of Dunbar's day, and contributing in unassessable ways to his cultural standards and poetic aims.

Realistic genre-painting, in which the Flemings excelled, is, to Professor Kinsley's mind, not Dunbar's natural mode. What he finds most distinctive in his genius is 'a wild comic fantasy, an extravagance of vision and expression which appears fitfully in some anonymous pieces of grotesquerie from Dunbar's time, but almost passed out of Scots poetry at the Reformation'. I wonder whether this fantasy is an offshoot, as with Bosch and later with the elder Pieter Bruegel, from the Fleming-like realism still congenial enough to Scots from the North Sea coast. Or was it rather an impulse of Celtic origin? Certainly, in one of the dubiously attributed poems on which Professor Kinsley relies to illustrate this fantasy, 'Harry, harry, hobbill-schowe . . .', Fyn McKowle, his wife, and Gow Makmorne derive from the Gaeldom of Alba and Eire which Dunbar affected to deride.

Some will find it interesting that Professor Kinsley now selects 'Kynd Kittok' for printing (no. 45). though in 1955 (p. 15) he thought that it does not show Dunbar's grip or rhythm. Now he remarks that 'the controlled fantasy of the poem, and the comically novel application of the romance

stanza, are characteristic of Dunbar as of no other Scots poet of his time'. Subjective judgments on these topics inevitably fluctuate. I should myself not dissent from Professor Kinsley's 1955 statement (p. 15): 'The humour of the Scottish poets, from Dunbar to our own time, inclines as often to the wildly fantastic as to the quiet and pawky. Dunbar's accredited work contains the best examples of a volatile and bizarre fancy controlled by art; but some anonymous poems of the same period illustrate, with variable literary grace, this characteristic Scottish delight in grotesque comedy.'

To assess Dunbar in his contemporary perspective, or in the lengthening perspective of Scottish poetry as a whole, or against the background of the poetry of all tongues and ages, is no light matter. To think oneself back into the world-view of a man several centuries dead is never easy, and the most erudite may slip. A trivial example is in Professor Kinsley's note on 96, 19, about wrestling, where he suggests that 'werslings' were hardly appropriate to a Scottish knight in 1505. Why not? Henry VIII of England was proud of his accomplishment in that branch of athletics, as were Francis I of France and James V, and as had been, in an older age, the poets Sophocles and Plato. To soak oneself in the literary heritage and mental atmosphere of so versatile a Makar as Dunbar, sufficiently to be able to illustrate his poems thoroughly, is a lifetime's work.

When Professor Kinsley has given us the complete edition, with adequate apparatus, commentary, and glossary, that he is competent eventually to produce, I hope to see Dunbar more clearly than I do now; and perhaps I shall then agree that 'wild comic fantasy' is the most distinctive element in his genius. Meantime I view him chiefly as a superbly competent Makar of *vers d'occasion*, with enormous talent for rising to the heights or plumbing the depths of particular occasions, sacred or secular, ceremonial or spontaneous; a consummate wielder of a splendidly heterogeneous vocabulary, who, while often disclosing a warped personality that leaves a nasty taste for a moment, yet constantly commands admiration for outpourings of music and displays of pageantry that are rivalled, among the works of Scotland's poets, only by the finest achievements of Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair and Somhairle Maclean.

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Summer Shealings

In summer the people remove to the hills and dwell in much worse huts than those they leave below; these are near spots of grazing and are called shealings, scattered from one another as occasion requires. . . . Here they make their butter and cheese.

Burt, *Letters from the North of Scotland*, 1754.

BURT was aware of the value of the shealing system in bringing cattle into good order and producing beef of 'extremely sweet and succulent' quality, but clearly both he and Pennant,¹ who knew it as a custom 'common to most mountainous countries', had a poor opinion of the mode of life which it entailed for the people. The Glasgow-born Mrs Grant of Laggan, on the other hand, though she accounted it one of 'the odd customs which prevail here', saw more in it than simply a vital factor in Highland economy. The move to the shealings stirred her 'pastoral imagination' and she would rise specially early to see the procession, the alp-drive of upper Speyside, pass her home. 'The people', she wrote, 'look so glad and contented at going up; but by the time the cattle have eat up all the grass and the time arrives when they dare no longer fish and shoot, they find their old home a better place and return with nearly as much alacrity as they went.'²

Mrs Grant had a high regard for the Highlander, and she put down his 'superior degree of fancy and feeling' to the leisure that came from his largely pastoral life: when not fighting or hunting his time was taken up with music, poetry and 'lounging in the sun'.³

The ease and leisure traditionally associated with the pastoral life may account in some measure for its appeal, and that it did afford some leisure, at least to the men, is clear from the report of a lowland business-man in 1755 to the Commissioners for Improving Fisheries and Manufactures: 'The men are solely employed in attending their cattle. When they

¹ *A Tour in Scotland* MDCCLXIX, (Chester, 1771), 102.

² *Letters from the Mountains* (6th edition, ed. J. P. Grant), ii, 136.

³ Grant, *op. cit.*, i, 229.

are disengaged from this they spend their time stretched in crowds basking themselves in the sun beams, or else in the whisky house. The women take care of the milk and at their leisure hours are generally spinning a little wool on the distaff for the use of the family.¹

That, in short, was life at the shealings, and it corresponds very closely with the succinct account given by a Banffshire man in the year 1770: 'When one goes with their family to sheal in any glen, they make their butter and cheese and spin as long as their women remain there with the milk cows.'²

Indications that the life was congenial are available much nearer our own day in the evidence of Alexander Carmichael contained in the Crofting Commission Report of 1884: 'The people enjoy this life at the hill pasturage and many of the best lyric songs in their language are in praise of its loved summer shealings.'³

There is no doubt that to the cattle, too, the change was a welcome one. Experiments, both in the eighteenth century and in our own time,⁴ have shown the cattle's preference at certain times for the more fibrous hill grasses and weeds which on account of their greater mineral content proved to be particularly palatable. In 'transhumance'⁵ there was undoubtedly something of 'the wisdom of the old Highland ways'; not only was the move to the hills to the liking of man and beast but it had the obvious advantage that much needed rest was thereby given to the grassland about the croft or farm. Moreover, in days when the only system of fencing was an 'animate' one,⁶ the risk of damage to crops, which generally resulted from any slackness in herding, was, in the absence of most of the livestock, greatly reduced.

Though the shealing system may often be thought of simply as an integral part of the old Highland economy

¹ Laing MSS. (Edinburgh University Library), Div. II, No. 623, 119-20.

² Gordon Castle Papers (Scottish Record Office), Box 39, Bundle 13. In future Gordon Castle Papers will be cited by Box and Bundle as G.C.P. XXXIX.13.

³ Appendix XCIX. Cf. A. Goodrich-Freer, *Outer Isles* (1902), 162: 'The summer exodus was indeed the great festival of the year and among the folk-songs of the people those in praise of the shealings are among the most poetical.'

⁴ See T. Bedford Franklin, *A History of Scottish Farming*, 65, 67; *British Grasslands*, 31-34.

⁵ The geographer's convenient term for the seasonal moving of livestock to or from the mountains.

⁶ *West Highland Survey*, ed. F. Fraser Darling, 210.

because of its persistence in these parts and, more particularly, in the Western Highlands and Islands, it was once, as monastic records¹ and the evidence of place-names go to show, much more generally practised in the hills lands of Britain.

The frequency with which the word 'shiel' appears in Lothian and Border place-names has been more than once commented on,² and the situation of the places so named is significant. The grassy haughs by Gala Water were doubtless grazed by cattle not simply in the area about Galashiels but well up to the source, about Brothershiels, and far up tributary streams such as the Lugate where relics of the custom remain in the names Over and Nether Shiels. In the Hawick area Borthwick Shiels; Deloraneshiel on the Ettrick; Foulshiels and Cauldshiels in the Yarrow district, and Cattleshiel in the Blackadder country, as well as Davyshiel and Stewartshiels near Otterburn, are evidence enough of a well-established pastoral custom.

In Highland parts, though the word 'shealings' appears regularly in documents concerned with land titles, it is the gaelic word *airidh* or, east of the main watershed, *ruidh* or *ruigh*,³ which offers a clue to the location of the old shealing sites.

There can be little doubt about the origin of the term 'shealings'.⁴ In an eighteenth-century shealing dispute one man in giving evidence refers to his 'sheal or bothie'⁵; military patrols at Inchrory in 1750 were housed in 'small shieldings or huts'⁶; and shealings on the Duke of Gordon's Lochaber estate are, on a sketch of the year 1767, marked as 'sheildings'.⁷ No doubt remains about the common derivation of 'shield' and 'shealing' when one finds that the roughest type of shelter in use at the shealings of upper Banffshire was called a 'scalan' (Gaelic, *sgalan*, shade or shelter).

¹ T. Bedford Franklin, *A History of Scottish Farming*, 64-70.

² E.g., I. F. Grant *Social and Economic Development of Scotland before 1603*, 106.

³ Gaelic, literally, 'arm'; outstretched part or base of a mountain; used of shealing slopes, or of the bothy itself.

⁴ Despite its derivation from the same root as 'shield' this was the spelling in use in Strathavon documents of the eighteenth century. This form was also used in Perthshire and the Eastern Highlands generally.

⁵ G.C.P., xxxix.13.

⁶ *Historical Papers 1699-1750*, ed. Allardyce (New Spalding Club), ii, 497, 545.

⁷ G.C.P., ix.II.5.

Use was made at times of the words 'grassings' and 'glen-nings' (or simply 'glen') as alternatives to 'shealings'; and the term 'glen herd' was commonly used for one employed in herding cattle at the summer grazings.¹

Each farm 'town' in the Banffshire highlands had its own 'glen' or shealing, or at least a share in one; to the subjects granted in tacks or leases there was generally added the phrase 'with sheallings used and wont'. Charters were sometimes more precise, and in contracts of wadset, too, the shealings were often named with the lands according to the usual style: 'The town and lands of Wester Camdell [etc.] with the shealings of Fergiemore, Merinloin, Fergiebeag and Fellinturk with houses biggings yards mosses pasturages grassings sheallings and haill pertinents thereof'; or, 'Easter Camdell . . . with the sheallings thereof called Riantorran and Badnafrave and all other sheallings and grassings pertaining to the said lands used and wont'.²

Family and estate papers must in this way contain much information regarding at least the location of shealings³ and possibly, where records of disputes over grazing areas are still extant, much more besides.

One such dispute concerned the area at the head of the River Don known as the Faevait (Feith Bhait) which from its proximity to the River Avon at Inchrory and its inclusion for centuries in Strathavon writs and charters was clearly much used by the Duke of Gordon's Strathavon tenants, although the Donside tenants of the Earl of Mar, and, later, of Forbes of Skellater, naturally felt they had every claim to the grazings in the upper reaches of their own river. And here the Gordon Castle Papers, preserved in the Scottish Record office, provide much valuable information on the dispute and also on the whole system of summer shealings.

From the seventeenth century there had been recurrent friction between the two factions and the respective factors and bailies were frequently on the ground: Spalding, the Earl of Mar's factor, Farquharson of Balmoral, Farquharson of Invercauld, 'Old' Gordon of Glenbucket, the Jacobite general, and Lords Grange and Dun all figure in the exchanges.

¹ Similarly, a tacksman writes of his not being 'a good glenman'.

² G.C.P., vi. 13.

³ See, e.g., *Atholl Chronicles* (1908), i, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv, which contain a list of over sixty shealings in the Forest of Atholl, prepared for the Earl of Atholl in 1669.

Agreement was reached in 1728 and the ground was appointed to be a commony for the people of Strathavon and Corgarff 'for pasturing their own cattle allendarlie'—an indication of one source of the trouble; and, though for a time 'good neighbourhood' prevailed, the zeal of the opposing bailies in promoting their own interests gradually led to the abandonment of the idea of a commony. Finally the matter went to arbitration and, though the evidence of many old witnesses was taken in the year 1770, the decret arbitral was not pronounced until 1786.¹

The evidence of these old witnesses,² who frequently date events in such fashion as 'some years after Sheriffmuir' or 'a year or two before Culloden', and among whom were survivors of Culloden and former members of the Black Watch, furnishes important and interesting facts about the cattle economy of the Highlands, while the eye-witness accounts and verbatim reporting add piquancy to the clash of personalities involved in the dispute.

Information was forthcoming about shealings other than the disputed area of the Faevait, and from the evidence much can be gleaned about the numbers and owners of the cattle which thronged the glens in summer.

At the shealings the cattle were grazed in numbers quite out of proportion to the limited stocks which, because of shortage of winter feed, were all that local tenants could maintain.³ It was, nevertheless, on the sale of their cattle that tenants relied for payment of their rent and the buying-in of meal,⁴ for at the best of times grain production was always inadequate. This insufficiency was indeed general throughout the Highlands proper, where production was equal to as little as six and at most ten months' consumption⁵; and insufficiency is not surprising in an area such as Strathavon, Banffshire, which has so much land over the three-thousand-foot contour and so little below the one-thousand-foot contour⁶ that climatic conditions are naturally difficult. There was in Strathavon,

¹ G.C.P., xv.7; xxxix.13 and 20.

² G.C.P., xxxix.13.

³ Cf. *West Highland Survey*, 239: 'It was well realized that the central Highlands could not winter anything like the stock it could summer.'

⁴ Tacksman bargained with the factor for meal from the Duke of Gordon's Huntley gimal.

⁵ Laing MSS., Div. II, No. 623, *passim*.

⁶ Only eight of the twenty-five miles of the Avon's course through Strathavon lie below one thousand feet in height.

however, some compensation for the shortage of arable ground in the abundance of hill pasture, though not all of this by any means was available to tacksmen and subtenants.¹

Since few tenants were able to take full advantage of the available pasture by buying in stock for summering, it had become the established practice for them to take in lowland or 'outlandish' cattle to be herded along with their own at a fee of one merk a head for the summer season. Tacksmen and subtenants alike admitted 'strangers' cattle' or *gall*² cattle to their hill pasture in such numbers that the shealings were 'pestered with them': one tacksmen taking four or five score in addition to his own cattle, and a professional herd fifty *gall* cattle over and above his employer's fifteen to twenty head 'to make it worth his while'. The Grants of Carron, on the strength of the extensive tract of territory they held in Strathavon, brought their Speyside cattle in great numbers to the Faevait, and the Grants of Ringorm, Lethendy, and Tamore regularly added their quota, some of them on terms that have all the appearance of subletting from local tenants. Corgarff tenants, too, took in low-country cattle, sometimes in exchange for the wintering of their own in Moray.

No Strathavon leases or minutes of tack actually granted the privilege of admitting outside cattle; from time to time, indeed, the practice had been expressly forbidden by act of regality or other order from the duke who expected such cattle to be sent to be grazed in the Forest of Glenavon which he kept in his own hands under a local manager, or let out to a tacksmen, for that purpose.

The income from the 'grazing' cattle was welcome to most tenants; some depended on it for meeting the rent of their holdings. But whatever economic necessity there may have been for the practice of admitting lowland cattle to the shealings, these cattle were in Scots law 'strays' and liable to be detained by the proprietor on whose ground they were trespassing. Whereas prior to 1686 a proprietor might only drive such cattle off his ground, a statute of that date empowered him on his own authority to detain the cattle until a penalty of half a

¹ The Forest of Glenavon, an area of approximately 36,000 acres, and its shealings (mentioned in a contract dated 1562: Fraser, *Chiefs of Grant*, iii, 419-21) were distinct from the ordinary shealings of the parish.

² Gaelic—strange, foreign; (of cattle) lowland. In depositions (1770) it is frequently written 'Gaul'.

merk per head had been paid, in addition to reparation for damage and expenses for keeping the cattle.¹

A crown per head was the penalty exacted in the Strathavon and Corgarff districts, with sixpence per head added for each night's herding of the poinded cattle. The cattle not at once relieved by cash or bill²—for few graziers had ready money—were driven off to some distance from the Faevait, to Balmoral for example, in order to put the owners to some trouble in recovering them.

Gall cattle were almost inseparable from the shealing system on the Banffshire–Aberdeenshire uplands and this abuse was the occasion of periodic 'drivings' and poinding of the trespassing animals, each side, Corgarff and Strathavon, attempting to surprise the other by *force majeure*.³ Parties of up to thirty men were used to 'draw the glen', poaching ploys and fishing expeditions being organised to cloak the real intention. Sometimes milk cattle were not taken because of the excessive hardship it would cause to calves as well as to owners. On one occasion no chance whatever was given to redeem the captured animals which were driven all the way to the Earl of Mar's residence at Alloa. Sometimes a timely warning enabled herdsmen to remove their cattle from debatable ground to a place of safety, and it was not unknown for false alarms to be given in order to create an amusing diversion.

Another method occasionally resorted to in dealing with encroachments on shealing areas was that of 'taking instrument' against the offenders 'in common form of protestation', a notary public being called in from as far off as Keith to draw up the formal protest on the site of the trespass; or that of making 'actual reall and legall interruption by throwing down the hail sheallings and bothies' of the intruders and cautioning them never to 'presume to sheal, build bothies or anyways possess the said ground under penalty of being liable for intrusion moles-

¹ See Bell, *Dictionary and Digest of the Law of Scotland*, s.v. *Poinding*; Green, *Encyclopaedia of Scots Law*, xii, 291.

² In 1751 Forbes of Skellater, an exile on the French coast, tried to recover payment of some of these bills through a relative in Strathavon to whom the bills had been sent. The bills bore the date 13 July 1743, payable on 15 August thereafter. (G.C.P., xxxix.13).

³ A Strathavon witness (deposition, 1770) tells how, when one of Lord Grange's servants attempted to poind his cattle, he 'threw him on his back in view of the spectators and carry'd off [i.e. saved] his cattle by speed of foot'. His resourcefulness was appreciated to the extent of his being offered a job by Lord Grange on the following day and a crown to drink his lordship's health.

tation oppression and wrongous possession and for all cost skaith and damage'.

This method was adopted in the remote Caiplich area of the Forest of Glenavon in 1728 when a court was held there and 'three peats and as many divots' of a 'sheal or hutt' were thrown down as a sign not only of removing but also of breaking any right which might be claimed by the inhabitants of Abernethy—Grants of Toberaie, Gartenmore, Lurg and Auchernach, chiefly—who found the Caiplich a convenient shealing ground and who even ventured deeper into the forest.¹

Glenavon, which was on a regular reivers' route to the west up to the year 1750,² was very vulnerable to trespass from Deeside, Donside and Speyside, and, with the help of armed watchers, quite a profitable business in poinding cattle could be done by an energetic deer-forester such as Robert Willox McGregor who, constantly 'at war with the three countries', did not account to Gordon Castle for anything like all the money penalties he exacted.³

The confused state of titles to, or at least the tenancy of, certain shealing areas can be put down to liberties granted at various times on account of family connections and inter-marriage.⁴ Ownership of some Banffshire shealings can be traced back to the fifteenth century⁵ but it is difficult to discover anything like a distinct system in the allocation of them to particular farms. Though one might expect the shealing to be in the upper reaches of the river on which the home farm stood and on the same bank of it, this is not invariably the case; but shealings in tributary glens seem all to have been the pertinents of farms on the same side of the main river as the tributary.

Distances from farms to shealings varied considerably, from three or four miles to as many as eighteen in Strathavon—with of course, much greater distances involved for *gall* cattle—depending on the extent and elevation of the upper glens.

¹ G.C.P., xxxix.18.

² *Historical Papers*, 1699-1750, ut. cit., ii, 490-8, 504.

³ G.C.P., xxxix.25.

⁴ E.g. The Farquharsons of Deeside, Donside, and Strathavon were related, but not always on the friendliest of terms: when Janet Farquherson of Wester Camdel gave milk to her namesake of Balmoral at her sheal, she 'wished it would be poison to him because he had poinded upon her own bothie there her husband's cattle and made him pay forty crowns for them which he still keep'd in his pocket'. There was intermarriage between the Gordons of Glenbuchat (bailies in Strathavon), the Forbeses of Skellater and Stewarts of Drumin.

⁵ G.C.P., vi.9.

In the Gordon territory in Lochaber in 1767 the distances were all considerable: 'the nearest of them will be 12 miles from the farmhouses and the furthest 18 miles'.¹ In Strathavon, the uppermost fifteen miles of the glen were, and still are, deer-forest country and outside the shealing area proper, though for long the forest was let to local tacksmen, so that cattle must have made the journey at least as far as the Bothan Dubh,² a few miles from Loch Avon. An estate map (1771)³ shows 'steep stony ground with some pasture' marked over 'strypes' or burns close to the loch. Those who know the situation of Loch A'an might be inclined to discount the implications of the place-name 'Meur na Banaraich' (Dairymaid's Finger⁴) at the head of the loch but, in 1773, Grant of Tullochgorum's glen herd was there with some cattle which the Strathavon deer-forester promptly removed to the poindfold at Gaulrig.⁵

It was doubtless at or near the Bothan Dubh—the site of the present Faindouran—that Professor Hill Burton (1809–81) had a boyhood adventure in Glenavon after losing his way from Loch Avon to Deeside. He met a drover in search of black cattle and spent the night under a roof of pine-roots covered with turf in company with some gaelic-speaking men of rough appearance whom he gladly left 'in full snore' in the early morning to find his way over Ben A'Bhuird and down the Quoich.⁶

It was precisely this sort of sheal that a Corgarff man in 1770 referred to as his 'scalan or houff made of divots and trees' upon the greens of Craigvean' and which he in the following year 'converted into a bothie'. Many such 'scalans' were built into a bank as 'dug-outs' lined with stones; others were of the circular or 'beehive' type, which have been photographed on Lewis and are similar to the 'cleits' of St. Kilda. The remains of groups of these circular sheals, formed by course upon course of dry stones and—since the stones have long since fallen into the central hollow—identified as 'cairns' by the Ordnance Survey, are on hill slopes which must have been ancient shealing sites. Only names are left as a clue to their former use.⁷

Many sheals were built to the same rectangular plan as

¹ G.C.P., ix.11.

² i.e., Blackshiels.

³ G.C.P., Maps and Plans No. 37.

⁴ i.e., branch of a stream.

⁵ G.C.P., xxxix.25.

⁶ J. H. Burton *The Cairngorm Mountains* (1864), 57–59.

⁷ See the illustration, 'The Whiskey Still', in McLan's *Highlanders at Home*.

⁸ A Strathavon burn, the Altrivah, in the vicinity of such cairns, appears on a six-inch O.S. sheet as 'Allt Ruigh Mhath', the Burn of the Good Shealing.

normal dwellings and the remains of many of these are still to be seen at known shealing sites.

'Shocking to humanity, formed of loose stones and covered with clods' was how Pennant described some Deeside houses he saw in 1769.¹ Accustomed to such crude winter dwellings, the families who occupied the summer bothies would not have thought them particularly primitive and were no doubt satisfied if they provided a shield against wind and rain for some weeks. A wayfarer among the Rannoch sheals in the summer of 1755 was not much impressed with their fitness for even that purpose after he had 'lodged in a little hutt in the middle of the Black Mount, which was not sufficient to shelter us from the heavy rains that fell during the night; but being much fatigued I slept on a little hay without any other covering than my wet cloaths in the company of about sixteen of the inhabitants'.²

Furnishings, according to Pennant, were of the simplest, as indeed they are in a Swiss herdsman's hut today: 'a few horn spoons, their milking utensils, a couch formed of sods to lie on, and a rug to cover them'.³ In the same Atholl country, some twenty years later, the Catholic Bishop Geddes saw at the head of the Garry 'a genuine shealing house' of which he has left this description: 'It was about 30 feet long; in the one end there were two beds formed by green turf about eighteen inches high and filled within with heather. In the middle was the fireplace with a stone at the back of it and a crook of wands from the balk of a couple. There were seats of green turf about the fire, fixed, and two or three moveable round turffs for little children's seats; in the other end is a place for some cows. I saw nobody but, from the remains of fuel, there had been people lately'.⁴

Many sheals were in quite unimpressive situations on knolls by some burn with grassy haughs. A favourite site was on the *stron* or 'nose' of land out of reach of floodwaters at the 'inver' of a burn, its junction with a larger stream. A few were in remarkably fine situations, almost Alpine in character. Such were the shealings of Dalnasac and Ruigh Speanan (where the people of Tomintoul shealed); the former, lying towards the head of a burn and near a spring, was tucked away behind a lip of a hill which on the other side drops sheer to the Avon; the

¹ *A Tour in Scotland*, MDCCLXIX (Chester, 1771), 109.

² Laing MSS., Div. II, No. 623, 108.

³ Pennant, *op. cit.*, 102. ⁴ *The Innes Review*, vi, II, 136-7.

latter, high above Inchrory on a ledge of pasture backed by cliff but accessible from the Faevait, commanded a fine view of the Cairngorm tops.

In most districts the move to the shealings appears to have taken place in June.¹ In some, such as Perthshire, the season was limited to about six weeks with dates set for departure and return.² The Cluny Macphersons, who held the Forest of Benalder from the Duke of Gordon, were not permitted to go to the shealings in the forest before 9 June each year.³ In upper Banffshire, however, there seem to have been no restrictions of this kind, owing, possibly, to the abundance of hill pasture there, and we find, for instance, one tenant writing that he kept his cattle in the glen 'the whole summer and a good part of the harvest'.⁴ It was usual for the men to go up in May to repair the bothies and cut timber—a scarce commodity—for the roofs. Grant of Carron was in the habit of sending his herdsmen up at the beginning of the month, some two weeks before the arrival of his cattle, to save the grass from other cattle and from the many horses left by the Strathavon people to run free until the time for 'leading' the peats.

Of interest in this connection are the dates of arrival in the Forest of Glenavon of the large droves of 'grazing' cattle. In 1750 the first arrivals, forty-three from Moray, were in the forest on 28 April and were followed at intervals of a few days by four other droves in early May to the number of 1099 head of cattle. In the three succeeding years the droves, considerably smaller, arrived in the middle or towards the end of May, and in 1754 on 29 April.⁵

At the shealings tenants and subtenants of various classes mingled. Robert Grant of Ringorm on Speyside sent his sons to herd their own stock, and Katherine Gordon of the Gordons of Tirriesoul and Camdel, who lived in Strathavon until her marriage 'except for being from home for her education', was regularly at the shealings. With their mothers and the 'deys' or dairymaids, girls tended the milk cattle and made the butter and the cheese—much of the latter to be stored for the winter—which the men carried down before fetching fresh supplies of

¹ *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, xiv, 138.

² Duke of Argyll, *Scotland as it was and as it is*, 202.

³ G.C.P., x, 15.

⁴ G.C.P., xxiii, 6.

⁵ G.C.P., Vouchers 1750-4 (Forest of Glenavon), Press III.a.1. The dates for the years 1750, 1751 and 1752 are of course 'old style' to which eleven days should be added.

meal and salt. Girls who were 'capable of turning beasts' also did some herding, and the children generally were put to the task of driving off with 'cabers' cattle which had no business to be around their sheal. Boys did not miss a chance of going to the shealings, as we know from James McDonald of Renetton who went with the herds when he was young 'for taking his diversion of the fowling'.

With cattle playing such a vital part in the economic life of the Highlands it was natural that herding should be the occupation of many men from about the age of fifteen. From one merk to one pound Scots for each beast was the normal fee for the season paid to a herd who kept *gall* cattle, whereas local cattle on their own pasture brought in only half a merk to tenpence a head. Something 'on the side', however, may have been made, for certain herds are mentioned as doing a good deal of trading in cattle with low-country owners.

That living was not 'high' is clear from the few references made to food: the pouring out of whey at a bothy door, the dispensing of milk to visitors, herds having 'meal and drink' or 'their victuals dress'd' in certain bothies, and cattle being 'blooded'.¹

Ordinary fare may, however, have been varied from time to time with the proceeds of a poaching expedition. Certainly the herds were absent for days at a time and there was little supervision of the stirks unless a 'driving' was feared.

By night the cattle were generally kept within bounds. There are many references, in the Faevait depositions, to the 'hefting' of cattle, and a witness explains that by that he means 'haining the cattle in a particular place each night'.² This the owners were required to do by law.³ The 'rive'⁴ or fold was usually near the sheal wherever there was 'a dry lair for the cattle' but often they were hefted without any enclosure, especially the large herds of low-country cattle.

¹ G.C.P., xxxix.13. Cf. Pennant: 'Their food oat-cakes, butter or cheese, and often the coagulated blood of their cattle spread on their bannocks' (op. cit., 102).

² 'Hain', like 'heft', = to enclose or confine.

³ Statute 1686, c. 11, required domestic animals to be kept in houses, folds, or enclosures at night. (See Bell, op. cit., s.v. Winter Herding, Planting and Inclosing. Rankine, *On Landownership* (4th edition), 611-12.)

⁴ In Jamieson, 'Reeve' (a pen for cattle. Aberd.). The word was in everyday use in eighteenth-century Strathavon and the gaelic words *ruigh* and *ruidhe* are often used with the same meaning, so that 'rive' and 'reeve' may well be a Scots form of the Gaelic words.

These hefting-places made fertile by repeated manuring were the first patches of shealing country to come under cultivation. This was simply an extension of the 'tathing' system used on the home croft by which arable ground was dunged by cattle lying upon it at night.¹ The names are recorded of men who made these 'improvements', herds and hired men who spent a long summer season in the hills and who found the fertility of the cattle-folds of the previous shealing season a sufficient inducement for them to attempt some cultivation.²

It would seem that there was a natural tendency for herds-men sooner or later to try to winter at their summer station and there to make some attempt at subsistence-level agriculture. Permanent settlement, particularly on the shealing sites in the main valley, followed in due course, the settlers assuming the status of subtenants on what was for a time part-shealing part-croft.

The transition from shealing to croft may be seen in the case of the 'farm or shealing belonging to Dougal Stewart of Appin at a remote or solitary place called Koalishnacoe' where Allan Breck Stewart had his 'allotted retreat'. While awaiting the arrival of his French clothes and some money, he was seen there on at least two occasions by the women who were then, in May 1752, with the milk cattle in the Heugh of Corryna-keigh³ high above Glencoe: Appin's 'bouman',⁴ John Breck Maccoll, had charge of the shealing (as it was more often referred to) which was by that time something of a croft, for we are told of his getting up on a Sunday morning 'to look about his corns'.⁵

This stage in shealing development is well exemplified in a plan⁶ of the Couglass-side⁷ shealings of about the year 1770

¹ Laing MSS., Div. II, No. 623, p. 118; I. F. Grant, *Every-Day Life on an Old Highland Farm 1769-1782*, p. 40.

² E.g. the site of cattle-folds near the Avon-Don watershed and at a height of 1,500 feet can be exactly determined from evidence given in 1770 and from a contemporary plan. It is precisely the same areas that continued to be cultivated into the present century by various keeper families at Lagganauil near Inchroy.

³ Near Sgor na Ciche, the Pap of Glencoe.

⁴ Cf. Laing MSS., Div. II, No. 623, pp. 116-17: 'In many places the cattle are committed to the charge of a man who is called Boroman, and who is obliged to deliver to the proprietor a certain quantity of butter and cheese.'

⁵ *Trial of James Stewart*, ed. Mackay, 46, 94, 148, 150, 181-6.

⁶ At Gordon Estates Office, Glenlivet.

⁷ Between Tomintoul and the Lecht pass to Donside.

on which, though the shealings are still shown as grazing-places of particular farms, many patches of arable land appear.

It was tenants themselves or their subtenants who first tended to push cultivation up the glens, thereby turning seasonal grazings into permanent crofts,¹ so that the Duke of Gordon's factor could say with some justice that the Corgarff people—and he might equally well have included the Strathavon people—had found it not just desirable but in fact necessary to occupy the Faevait grazings because they had cultivated their own shealings.

What, however, was at first done on tenants' initiative became in time a matter of official policy with the Duke of Gordon and his factors. It was considered to be 'for the Duke of Gordons benefit and advantage to have his glens improven so far as they can be spared'. Encouragement was given in the first place by the granting of a tack of 'improvable' ground without money rent for a space of one year. This resulted in no loss to the rental as the new possession was separated from the original holding 'without deduction of rent'.

As early as 1710 a tacksman was required to pay for a nineteen years' tack of the glen or shealing he already possessed 'such rent as shall be determined by two knowing men'; and three years later the tenants of the Glen of Suie in the Braes of Glenlivet, which up to that time had been 'pastured upon promiscuously' by several tenants in lower Glenlivet, were to continue to have 'the liberty to pasture with their cattle through the haill glen as formerly except what the said John Grant [the factor and chief tacksman] closes within sufficient dykes'.²

Two of the largest shealings in Strathavon—Lettermore and Blairnamarrow—were in 1721 separated from the tacks to which they had belonged, but little was made of them for many years until the Lettermore (140 acres of rough pasture) was enclosed by a feal dyke and put under a park-keeper who had to 'seek in' cattle for grazing.³

It was with the redemption and break-up of the wadset lands into many separate tacks, a process which in Strathavon began in 1795 and continued until 1768, that the way was clear for

¹ Stephen Bone has described a similar process of pushing permanent habitation further and further up the valleys in Sweden until the *jabod* (dairy-farm or shealing) eventually reaches the Arctic tundra (*The Listener*, 19 July 1956).

² G.C.P., xxiii.22.

³ G.C.P., xl.9; xli.28.

the detaching of shealings from farms. A new clause was inserted in tacks: 'If it happens that there be any shealings belonging to the said possession which are improveable and that the said—do not improve as others would he and his forsaid shall be hereby bound and obliged to cede and give up possession of such sheallings to the said Duke of Gordon.'¹

The example of what happened when a shealing was 'improved' was already before the tenants in the case of the glen called Lynavoir, for which in 1735 the tacksman of Dell had to pay fifty merks 'of new additionall rent the same having paid nothing formerly'. By 1753 this former shealing was set as a distinct holding and by 1765 it was, according to the usual formula, credited with 'mosses muires and sheallings' of its own.²

There is for some reason, it is true, the very opposite provision in three Glenlivet tacks of 1767 which obliged the principal tacksmen *not* to improve or labour any part of the shealing 'at the rive of the Leather'³ where they and their subtenants were to 'sheal as formerly'.⁴

However, by 1784 the separation of shealings from farms was almost complete, the many tacks renewed at that date containing a clause which specifically excluded the former shealings from the holdings. Only two farms retained possession of their shealings until 1791 when the dissolution of the shealing system in Strathavon was complete.⁵

One or two of the more substantial tenants rented former shealings as 'grazing farms' or 'sheep ranges', settling shepherds and subtenants on them—in one case, at least, the subtenants paid handsomely (£19) to use the place as a 'smuggling station'—until in 1841 even these outlying grazings were incorporated in an enlarged Glenavon deer-forest to be tenanted by Lord Henry Bentinck. And so the *coup de grâce* to the remaining vestiges of the old cattle-producing shealings came from sheep and deer interests.

¹ G.C.P., xxiii.2.

² Ibid.

³ Elsewhere, 'Ladder', the name now given to the pass over the Glenlivet hills to Glenbuchat; probably from Gaelic *leitir*.

⁴ G.C.P., xxiii.3.

⁵ G.C.P., xxiii.4 and 5. In an article, 'Farms of Verald Norway' (*The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 70, No. 3, Dec. 1954), William Kirk and Francis M. Syngé have given an interesting account of the decay of the *sæter* system in that part of Norway, roughly a century later than in Scotland and from different causes.

In the opinion of the editor of the *West Highland Survey* 'It is probable that the Highlands were better commercially organized in this cattle trade of the eighteenth century than they have been since.'¹ And again, 'The old-time cattle-breeding husbandry of the Highlands and Islands was so well organized that it might have been planned on the basis of a policy, but we know that it merely grew and became trimmed to its definite system by time and circumstance.'²

It is not, perhaps, too much to claim that the cattle-breeding husbandry of former times was based on the system of the summer-shealings and that it was with the loss of the shealings, whether to tillage or deer-forest, that the decline in the economy of the Highlands first set in.

VICTOR GAFFNEY³

¹ *Op. cit.*, 3.

² *Ibid.*, 239.

³ Formerly research student in the University of Edinburgh.

The 'Huseby' System in Orkney

IN a small volume published in 1955 under the title *Husebyar*¹ I endeavoured to establish an historical basis for the system of administration which gave rise to the names Huseby, Husbj, Husabø, etc., so frequently to be found in northern lands. In Sweden the number is just under 70; in Norway almost 50; while in Denmark (including Slesvig) there are eight, and in Orkney four. The results I arrived at can be summarised for the most part as follows.

Huseby (O.N. *Húsabýr*, *Húsabær*) was a technical name for a royal administrative farm of a military character. The system first arose in the Swedish province of Uppland—the region to the north of Stockholm and around the old royal seat of Uppsala—before the middle of the seventh century, and there it would seem to have been developed to such extent that a 'huseby' was to be found in each of the old districts called *hund* or *hundare* (cf. the English *hundred*). Thus ten huseby names can be traced in the old Tiundaland (land of ten hunds), and eight in Attundaland (land of eight hunds). These two areas were the old central settlements in Uppland. And from Uppland the system was extended to other Swedish regions as the Swedish kings gradually extended their sway.

One branch of the Swedish Yngling race (ancestors of the later Norwegian kings) carried the system along with them in the eighth century to Norway, where farms so named lie like footprints along the route they followed (according to *Ynglingasaga* and *Ynglingatal*), from Värmland in Sweden over the east Norwegian settlements of Solør and Hedmark on to Vestfold on the west side of Oslo Fjord. From Vestfold they carried the system farther north-west over Numedal and Langfjella to Sogn, and about A.D. 900—roughly about the same time that a Swedish conqueror took the huseby-system to Denmark—the system was introduced by King Harald Fairhair into the Trondheim area, the Nordmøre-Romsdal area, the whole of north Norway and into Orkney. Even before A.D. 700, however,

¹ Published by Den Norske Historiske Forening, Oslo, 1955.

the system had reached south-east Norway in another way, and spread through Vingulmark on the east, north and north-west sides of Oslo Fjord. And into south-west Norway it seems to have been introduced during a short-lived Swedish conquest round about A.D. 800 or the early years of the ninth century.

Certain facts indicate that the system in the southern part of Nordmøre and the northern half of Romsdal was organised under the well-known chieftain Earl Rognvald of Møre, ancestor of the Orkney earls and (according to Norwegian and Icelandic tradition) ancestor also of the Normandy earls, and through them of the Norman kings who from 1066 occupied the English throne.

What follows is, with a few formal adjustments, a translation by Dr Hugh Marwick of those parts of *Husebyar*¹ which have a bearing on the history of Orkney.

From Orkney Dr Marwick has recorded four Huseby farms which he has discussed in his *Orkney Farm Names* (1952).

These are:

Houseby, Stronsay. 'Still a large and most excellent farm.'

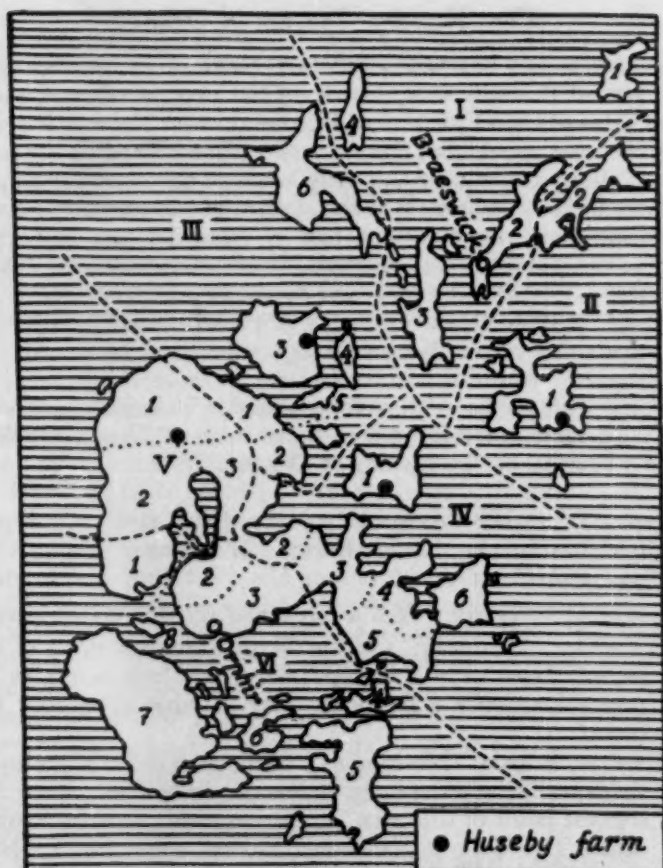
Housebay, Shapansay. On the fertile southern slope of the island. Now only a smallish farm but 'represents in all probability only a fractional part of what once bore the name'.

Husabae, Rousay. No longer a farm; now only 'a group of fields on the present farm of Hurtiso in Sourin'. Near the highest point of this area 'is, or was until recently, a knoll called The Taft of Husabae'. Round about lie 'a whole group of small farms'. No doubt an ancient head-farm.

Housebay, Birsay. This farm lies 'on the shore of the Loch of Sabiston with the old urisland chapel adjacent'.

From the above it may be seen that these four Huseby farms lie or lay (one, as noted, has vanished) each on a separate island; one on Stronsay beside a bay on the south-east of the isle, one on the south side of Shapansay near the old church, one—now vanished—on the east side of Rousay near the sound between that isle and Egilsay, and one in the north-west quarter of the Mainland. The last-named lies some four or five miles inland, immediately north of Dounby where roads from four directions meet, and also near the meeting point of

¹ Op. cit., pp. 63, 197-208.



Attempted reconstruction of the six huseby districts in Orkney. Minor areas and numbers of urislands within each district would be as follows:

- I (1) North Ronaldsay 4, (2) Western part of Sanday 19½, (3) Eday 2, (4) Papa Westray 4; in all 29½.
- II (1) Stronsay 13, (2) Eastern part of Sanday 16½; in all 29½.
- III (1) Evie 8, (2) Rendall (with Gairsay) 5, (3) Rousay 6½, (4) Egilsay 2, (5) Wyre 4, (6) Westray 13; in all 35½.
- IV (1) Shapansay 6½, (2) Firth 3, (3) St. Ola 7, (4) St. Andrews 5½, (5) Holm 6½, (6) Deerness 6; in all 34½.
- V (1) Birsay 13 or 14, (2) Sandwick 17½, (3) Harray 4½; in all 35 or 36.
- VI (1) Stromness 6½, (2) Stenness 3½, (3) Orphir 4½, (4) Burray 2, (5) South Ronaldsay 8, (6) Flotta 4, (7) Hoy 7½, (8) Graemsay 2; in all 34½.

As *thirds* the combinations I+II, III+IV and V+VI (or I+II, III+V and IV+VI) present themselves, as *halves* the combinations I+II+III and IV+V+VI (or I+II+V and III+IV+VI).

the three parishes of Birsay, Harray and Sandwick. That is to say, the farm occupies a central position for a wide tract in the north-west of the island. We lack a corresponding Huseby in the south of the island, but there instead lies Orphir—the old earls' seat—on the edge of Scapa Flow. The *Orkneyinga Saga* gives a detailed description of that place and says *inter alia* that 'þar var mikill husabær'.¹ By that term, however, the Icelandic saga-writer has probably only thought that there were large houses at the place.

If we add Orphir to the four Huseby farms we get a ring of five such farms separated from each other by distances not very dissimilar. If we think of a round tour from Orphir to Houseby in Birsay, thence to Rousay and on to Stronsay and so on over Shapansay back to Orphir, we find the distances from farm to farm as the crow flies approximately 11½, 10½, 15, 10½ and 13 miles. Here then, in Orkney as elsewhere, it may be thought that a certain district has been attached to each huseby. If we attempt to reconstruct such districts we have admittedly to go more or less on guesswork. Nevertheless there are certain old-time divisions which may serve as clues. First there are the parishes which are of ancient origin, and which may be of use in considering the Mainland in particular. Then within the parishes we have the old divisions into urislands or ouncelands. Each urisland was divided up into 18 pennylands or four 'skattlands'—each of four and a half pennylands—and embraced a group of farms, or one large farm (occasionally it formed only part of a still larger farm). In olden times a skatt or tax of one ounce of silver (= 18 pennies) was levied annually from each urisland or ounceland, land units which had probably been in existence themselves from a still earlier age. Thus the urisland divisions may give an indication of how the population was distributed in the different islands and districts right back in Viking times. From rentals dating from c. A.D. 1500 and later it has been reckoned that in Orkney as a whole there were somewhat under 200 urislands.

Let us begin with the Birsay Houseby, situated as we saw near the meeting point of three parishes—Birsay, Harray and Sandwick. In these three parishes which might have composed one huseby district there were in all some 35 or 36 urislands.

North-east of Birsay lies Evie parish, a narrow strip impinging on the sound between the Mainland and Rousay where we find

¹ *Orkneyinga Saga* (ed. S. Nordal), 168.

the next Husabae. In Evie there were eight urislands, but if we were to include these with the previous group of 35/36 we should have an urisland count really too high for a single huseby district if we have to reckon with at least five of such districts in Orkney altogether. It would thus seem better to group this strip of the Mainland as well as the adjacent parish of Rendall along with Rousay. With this Rousay district might also be reckoned in the small isles of Egilsay and Wyre, as well as the larger and more northerly Westray. In these altogether there were some 35 urislands.

About a mile north-east of Westray is Papa Westray which contained four urislands. One might suppose that this island should go along with Westray, but as we shall see presently there are indications that Papa Westray, despite its situation, was administratively grouped with islands to the north-east. I return to that later.

For the Shapansay Houseby we might conjecture a district including Shapansay and the east Mainland together with the other Mainland parishes of Firth and St. Ola—a district which would embrace 34½ urislands.

In the remainder of the Mainland including the parishes of Stromness, Stenness and Orphir in the south-west, and in the South Isles of Graemsay, Hoy, Flotta, Burray and South Ronaldsay, etc., we could reckon a district of roughly 34½ urislands also. That could have formed an appropriate district based on the old earls' seat in Orphir.

We are now left with the Stronsay Houseby and the isles to the north-east: Stronsay (with Papa Stronsay and Auskerry), Eday, Sanday and North Ronaldsay. Together with these as noted above we have to consider Papa Westray to the north-west. These isles it would appear have had a form of skatt common to them all, but different from the rest of Orkney. The old Orkney skatt—apart from 'forcop' and 'wattle'—corresponds to the Norwegian skatt called 'leidang', and was payable by a certain quantity of butter and grain from each urisland. Round about A.D. 1500, and later, the butter skatt everywhere was charged partly in butter and partly in money. The other skatt was paid in malt, and in certain cases 'cost' (i.e. two-thirds malt and one-third meal), in all the isles except those just mentioned (except Burray where payment was reckoned in money). In Sanday and Papa Westray, however, the grain skatt was paid with 'bigg' (a kind of barley).

Stronsay and North Ronaldsay are missing from the oldest rentals, but from a 1595 rental it appears that bigg was also paid there.¹ We have no available data about Eday at all, and so we can but follow the analogy of Stronsay and Sanday. Now, in Norway, boundaries between different types of 'leidang' skatt regularly coincided with old district boundaries, and the same was presumably the case in Orkney.

In Stronsay, Eday, Sanday, North Ronaldsay and Papa Westray there were, in all, at least 59 urislands, nearly as many as in two of the huseby districts I have already attempted to reconstruct. I am therefore of opinion that there has been either an additional Huseby farm or a corresponding central farm. Two other facts seem to point in that direction. One is the situation of Houseby in Stronsay which lies right out on the perimeter of the group. The other is that, according to the tradition in the *Orkneyinga Saga*, for a couple of generations after the fall of the Orkney Earl Sigurd the Stout in the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 the Orkneys were first divided into thirds between three of Earl Sigurd's sons, and later into halves from time to time between two earls. Orphir was a seat for the earl who had the southern half. With an earlier division into six more or less equal huseby districts, both the division into three and that into two would have been easy to arrange.

Now in Sanday alone there were 36 urislands. That is to say—if the whole area of 59 urislands was divided into two huseby districts the boundary between them must have passed across Sanday. That island happens to be divided naturally into two roughly equal halves by Otterswick, a bay which runs in from the north, and Kettletoft Bay which runs in from the south. The isthmus between is only about a mile across, and over that isthmus runs the boundary between the parish of Lady to the east and that of Cross and Burness to the west. In the eastern parish there were $16\frac{1}{2}$ urislands, which together with the Stronsay 13 would amount to $29\frac{1}{2}$. In Cross and Burness there were $19\frac{1}{2}$ urislands, and these together with the two in Eday, four in North Ronaldsay, and four in Papa Westray, would make a similar total of $29\frac{1}{2}$. These then could have been the two huseby districts we were seeking.

¹ It must be added here that the corresponding skatt in Westray was in 1595 similarly paid with bigg. That year skatt and rent were lumped together. At the same date bigg had replaced malt on isles south of the Mainland. In Rousay, Shapansay and the Mainland malt was paid as before. For early times it would seem best to reckon on the 1500 skatt types.

In this last and most northerly district a huseby or central farm must have lain on the west side of Sanday, e.g. near Braeswick in the south-west of the island. Here was a two-uriland called *Southwall*, originally a name for Braeswick (*wall* = Ork. *-wa* from O.N. *vágr*, bay) which later became a communal name for farms on the south and east sides of the bay. In a document of 1664 that complex is termed 'the xxxvi pennyland Kingsland of Southwall'. A mile to the north-east lies Warsetter, which in the sixteenth century was the seat of the elder branch of the Sinclair family—the successors of the last Orkney earls prior to the pledging of the isles in 1468. Farms on the north side of the bay, including Garth, a whole uriland, have gone in with Warsetter. Everything suggests that somewhere here has been an old central farm which perhaps has been a parallel in the north part of Orkney to Orphir in the south.¹

If now we think afresh of a round tour from Orphir and back over the huseby farms in the previous order and insert a sixth near Braeswick between the Rousay and the Stronsay farms, the distances from farm to farm as the crow flies would be approximately 11½, 10½, 12, 10½, 10½ and 13 miles. The total distance is greater, but each on the whole is not very dissimilar.

This system of division of which we have formed an idea in our attempt to reconstruct huseby districts in Orkney has a parallel in the system to be found in the Isle of Man, and which in its broad outlines is now clear from the researches of Professor C. J. S. Marstrander and H. Marwick.² That island, which was seized by Norsemen early in the Viking period, and which later was knit politically for a long time with the Hebrides—for one period under Norse suzerainty—has from olden days been divided into six districts called *sheadings*. Each sheading again is divided into *treens*, and each treen is, or was, divided into four *quarterlands*. The word sheading, according to Marstrander, is originally Norse—representing the O.N. *settungr* (sixth part). To the Manx treen corresponds the Hebridean *tirung*, which like the treen was divided into four quarterlands. The term *tirung* is a literal Celtic translation of the Old Norse *eyrisland* (ounceland) from Celtic *tir*, land, and

¹ See Note at end.

² Marstrander, 'Det Norske Landnám på Man', in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, vi, 1932, and 'Treen of Keeill', *ibid.*, viii, 1937. Marwick, 'Leidang in the West', in *Proc. Orkney Antiq. Soc.* xiii, 1934-5, and 'Naval Defence in Norse Scotland', *ante*, xxviii, 1949.

unga, ounce, and *treen* is the Manx form of the same. The quartered *treen*, the quartered *tirung* and the quartered *urisland* or *ounceland* (quartered into four *skattlands*) were thus the same.

The similarity between Orkney and Man is further apparent from the fact that both in each Manx *treen* and in each Orkney *urisland* there was usually a small chapel (in Man called *Keeill*). But the similarity goes still further. From *skatt*-lists of 1511-15 it appears that the number of *treens* in the six Manx *sheadings* were respectively 32, 27, 34, 20, 28 and 35—in all 176. In addition there were roughly 160 quarterlands or 40 *treens* of church or cloister lands in the different districts, so that the total number of *treens* was about 216, or 36 in each *sheading*. The corresponding number of *urislands* in the six *huseby* districts in Orkney, as we have seen, may be set at 35 or 36, 35, 34½, 34½, 29½, 29½—in all 198 or 199. These figures are probably somewhat too low, since possibly some old *urislands* in *skatt*-free *bordlands* are not included. Thus the six *huseby* districts which I have arrived at for Orkney correspond rather closely with the six *sheadings* or 'sixths' of Man.

Apart altogether, however, from that correspondence between *huseby* districts and *sheadings* there is sufficient to make clear that there has been a close relationship between the Orcadian and the Manx organisation. And here the Hebrides must also be drawn in. As noted already a *tirung* in the Hebrides was the same as a *treen* in Man or an *urisland* in Orkney. But the *tirung* was also known by the Celtic term *davach*, which was a name for a corresponding land unit in northern Scotland. It would seem clear that the names *tirung* in the Hebrides and *treen* in Man are in reality younger names for land units which were to be found in these isles before Norsemen ever came thither. Marwick is convinced that the same holds good in the case of *urislands* in Orkney. The local rural basis for the administrative system in Orkney and in Man is thus of Celtic origin. But the name *sheading* shows that the 'District divisions' in Man are due to the Norse. Now it is unreasonable to suppose that Man had got its Norse organisation earlier than Orkney. The great similarity between Orkney and Man can therefore be regarded in one of two ways: (a) that they have both been organised more or less simultaneously and the same principle followed in both; or (b) that the Orkney arrangement was the older and became the model or pattern

for the Manx. That would imply that Orkney like Man had had a division into *settungs* or 'sixths'. And as it would now appear that the 'sixth parts' in Orkney have been huseby districts, we may in my opinion be justified in regarding the correspondence between the Orcadian and the Manx divisions as confirmation that the interpretation I have made of the Huseby farms in Orkney is in the main correct: in other words—that the Huseby names in Orkney are evidence of an old huseby system there as elsewhere.

We have finally to consider how the huseby system can have come to Orkney. The Norse element in the dialects show that the Norsemen who settled in Orkney and other islands in the west hailed for the most part from south-west Norway. Now there we have already found a huseby organisation. One might therefore be disposed to guess that an emigrant chieftain from that area may have taken the system with himself to Orkney. But more closely considered that view appears unlikely. After an analysis of the archaeological data in the isles, Professor A. W. Brøgger¹ concluded that even though some Scandinavians may have reached Orkney and Shetland before A.D. 800, yet, it was most probable that the settlement proper should be assigned to the period A.D. 800-60. And the stream of immigrants must have been great, since both the older Celtic names, and probably great part of the former population, were swept away in a couple of generations. In that same period—from about 800 onwards—we have the great Viking expeditions to Ireland and the founding there of a Norse kingdom by emigrants for the most part from south-west Norway also.

In my *Husebyar* I reached the conclusion that the huseby-system was introduced into south-west Norway just about the year 800, that the system came direct from Sweden, and that we have grounds for assuming a Swedish domination of south-west Norway round about 800 or the early years of the ninth century. In so far as that is correct it would be reasonable to see a cause and effect relationship between that Swedish domination and the great emigrations. But it is highly improbable that such fleeing emigrants would have taken with them to their new abode an administrative system which had reached south-west Norway with their Swedish conquerors.

An alternative view is more probable. The *Orkneyinga Saga* tells how King Harald Fairhair one summer 'fared west over

¹ A. W. Brøgger, *Den norske bosetningen på Shetland-Orknøyene*, p. 238.

the ocean' to chastise Vikings who harried Norway in summer but lurked in Orkney and Shetland in winter. On that expedition he took under his sway Shetland, Orkney and the Hebrides, and sailed on to Man where he laid waste the Manx homesteads. He fought many battles, and took possession of lands so far west that no Norse king has won land farther west since. In one battle Ivar, son of Earl Rognvald of Møre, was slain, and King Harald gave his father Orkney and Shetland as 'son-bote'. Rognvald set first his brother, and afterwards two of his sons in succession, to govern the isles, and each of these was created an Earl by the King. The youngest of these, Turf-Einar, was the ancestor of the later Orkney earls. Snorre, who has used the *Orkneyinga Saga*, tells very much the same story, and in his account of that expedition to the west he makes reference to a scaldic verse of Torbjörn Hornklove (one of King Harald's scalds).

Now it strikes one at once that those isles which King Harald took possession of are the same as later had the ounce-land (tirung, treen) organisation. In that connection it should be added that Shetland had urisland divisions as well as Orkney, so that this organisation thus extended from Shetland to Man. Marwick therefore thinks that the skatt or tax which gave its name to the ounce-land must be dated back to Harald Fairhair. I shall not enter on that problem here, but will point out that according to saga tradition it was Earl Rognvald of Møre who got control of Orkney from King Harald, and that the later Orkney earls reckoned their descent from him. I have previously mentioned that it seems to have been this Rognvald who introduced the huseby system into southern Nordmøre and the northern half of Romsdal. If that be so, it would fit in well to think that it was he also, or one of those ruling in his place, who introduced the system into Orkney. The task facing a governor of Orkney first and foremost would have been the same as that which Snorre says was given to Earl Rognvald by the King when he was made chieftain over Nordmøre and Romsdal: to defend the land against enemies ('un-peace'). In Orkney that would have meant—against Vikings. Here as in those Norwegian provinces it would have been serviceable to buttress the watch with a system of husebys. In connection with that system the isles have got the administrative divisions we have been considering. These divisions greatly resemble those we arrived at in connection with the Nordmøre-Romsdal

area. There would seem to have been six huseby districts there as also in Orkney, and the individual district in each region (judging from the farms included in each) could have been somewhat similar: an Orkney urisland might be reckoned as corresponding to four normal Norwegian farms. The similarity should not be pressed too far, but, in any case, nowhere else in Norway can we find any closer parallel to the organisation in Orkney.

From the foregoing I believe we may be able to date the huseby organisation in Orkney to a period following the Battle of Hafrsfjord, i.e. the early years of the tenth century.

ASGAUT STEINNES.¹

Note. When I wrote *Husebyar* and was making my attempt to reconstruct the huseby districts in Orkney, I was aware of the attempt previously made by J. Storer Clouston to reconstruct the Orkney 'thirds' and 'halves'.² I found, however, that if I tried to accommodate my reconstruction to his by simply dividing his thirds into sixths, I should have to allow for a wider range of variations of the urisland numbers within different huseby districts than I thought reasonable (from $25\frac{1}{2}$ to $38\frac{1}{2}$ or even to $42\frac{1}{2}$). I therefore deemed it safer to try a reconstruction of my own.

For the northernmost huseby, which was unknown, I suggested a site somewhere near Braeswick on the west side of Sanday. Now Dr Marwick has pointed out that about a mile north-east of Braeswick, in the crofters' land below Warsetter (described as 'exceedingly fertile old land'), there is a large mound, the site of a vanished house, which is called 'not Huseby but simply Husay' and is the traditional abode of a *hogboon* of whom tales are told. 'To me', Dr Marwick writes, 'it would seem that in this Husay we have an almost exact parallel to the Rousay vanished Husabae.' This place, then, may have been the site of the missing huseby. Half a mile west of Husay (or Hoosay, as the name is spelled elsewhere) is a little bight called *Pool*, which, according to Dr Marwick, may have offered a better harbour for viking craft than the Braeswick bay itself.³

Orkney historians may wonder why I have not mentioned the earls' seat at Birsay on the north-west coast of Mainland as well as Orphir. The reason is that in my opinion the earls' seat there is younger than the huseby system. I should imagine that, as an administrative residence, it superseded the Birsay Husebay which, with its inland position, may have proved less suitable for a sea-faring chieftain.

¹ Riksarkivar, Oslo. The author and the *Scottish Historical Review* are much indebted to Dr Hugh Marwick for his translation and for other help.

² *Ante*, xvi, 15-21; *A History of Orkney*, pp. 34-36.

³ *The Orcadian*, 30 January 1958. Letter from Dr Marwick, 8 December 1957. *Orkney Farm-Names*, p. 11.

Reviews

THE SCOTTISH BURGH¹

It was a happy and judicious choice that led Professor Dickinson to Aberdeen, for that burgh can boast, in his words, of 'a wealth of record far surpassing that of any other Scottish burgh'. True, not all of his current offering appears in print for the first time: the unique burgh court roll for 1317, as well as extracts from the register of 1398-1407 (marking the start of the almost continuous series of court and council records), came before the public in the nineteenth century. Any slight disadvantage accruing from a certain duplication of effort is easily outweighed by the gain in fulness and accuracy, for he has given us, in effect, everything that survives from the fourteenth century. The 1317 roll is quite brief, and the bulk of the text comprises the 'council, bailie and gild court register' from Michaelmas 1398 to Michaelmas 1400; a short addendum gives extracts from the years 1401-7, though with a gap between October 1402 and January 1405. The great merit of the text resides in the clarity of the picture it provides of the week-by-week, and often day-by-day, workings of the judicial and administrative machine, and this amply justifies the decision to print *in extenso* the record of two whole years.

The 'backbone' of the text is supplied by the proceedings of the burgh court, which, as the editor explains in a detailed analysis (pp. cxvii-cxxiv), took one of three forms. The *curia capitalis*, following the established style, met at (or near) Michaelmas, Yule and Easter; the *curia legalis* sat at fortnightly intervals (*a quindenam*) on Mondays; and intermediate meetings of the simple *curia* were held on other days of the week, often on several consecutive days. Each of these courts is described as *tenta per ballivos*²; while all of them were competent for the discharge of the normal judicial business of the burgh,³ special importance—in administration as well as justice—attached to the head courts, and particularly to that held at Michaelmas, when the burgh elections took place. On that

¹ *Early Records of the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1317, 1398-1407*. Ed. by William Croft Dickinson. Pp. cli, 266. Edinburgh: Scottish History Society. 1957.

² It is noteworthy (and, so far as the experience of this reviewer goes, highly exceptional) that the rubric for each court meeting usually runs in the ablative (*curia capitali*, *curia legali*) and not the more orthodox nominative: see the editor's note on p. 46.

³ Another idiosyncratic usage is the form *in plana curia*, though from June 1401 a change is observable to the more usual *plena curia*: p. 207f.

occasion there were chosen the alderman (or provost), four bailies, common councillors (to the number of twenty or twenty-one), four sergeants, the liners (ranging between nine and thirteen), four flesh-prisers, four ale-tasters, two wine-tasters, three or four kirk-masters, and two or three *depositores*, or receivers of burghal revenue (the forerunners of the treasurer). In distinction to the *curia ballivorum*, a gild court or assembly, here called a *prima*, was held under the presidency of the alderman, with special responsibilities in the detection and punishment of regraters and forestallers and in maritime cases, and also in the making of 'acts' anent trade and merchandise, good neighbourhood and good order, and the proper conduct of business in all the burgh courts. Occasional entries in the record show lists of fines, ordinances *per commune consilium*, asseda-tions of burgh revenues and, at the end, the compt of the bailies' financial intromissions in the year 1406-7.

Abounding in matters of varied interest, the text sheds much light on judicial practice. In 1317 it was pled on behalf of a young heiress that, being fifteen years old in 1314, she was of perfect age to contract sales and alienations and that, moreover, she had duly offered her land at three burgh courts *proximioribus amicis sanguinis sue*; on each point burghal law was satisfied—*secundum leges burgorum Scocie* (p. 5). Later that year another litigant asserted that the cause at issue *tangebatur suam hereditatem, quare de iure non tenebatur respondere sine littera de capella domini regis* (p. 12)—a sharp reminder that the burgh was 'the king's burgh'. In 1399 a married daughter protested against her mother's sale of an annual rent of 2s. 6d. sterling on the ground that it had not first been offered *ad certos dies legales . . . propinquioribus de sanguine*, and that the transaction was therefore *contra leges et statuta burgorum* (pp. 60-61). At the next court Thomas Moderach came in the bailies' will *quia iniuste namavit quosdam vicinos ville non pro debitis suis propriis, set pro debitis quorundam vicinorum ville* (p. 61)—a clear breach of one of the 'Laws of the Four Burghs'.¹ A man could incur an amercement by acting as *prelocutor* for a litigant without licence of the bailies, for this amounted to *perturbando curiam affirmatam* (p. 78). Unruly conduct was stigmatised in 1401 as being in *vituperium, scandalum, et pudorem regis et legis* (p. 205). Between April and July 1406 all burgh courts were suspended until the general council at Perth declared, for the guidance of those infest with jurisdiction, that courts must be fenced by authority of Robert, Duke of Albany, as governor of the kingdom (p. 220).²

The record is well worth the attention of the student of economic and social life. Forestallers and regraters, of course, are classed with *communes rebelles* and petty thieves ('pikaris'), but a presumption of

¹ Took poulds from.

² c. 32, *A.P.S.*, i. 339.

³ See *ante*, xxxii, 199-200.

evil-doing also attached to those *habentes porcos*¹ and to those *facientes sterquilina* [dung-heaps or middens]. The commonest offenders against the law were accused *de perturbacione uille, de percussione, or de inobedientia balliuis*; others were charged with insufficient malt-making (*de mala molicione brasii*) or price-breaking (*pro fraccione precii carniū*), or, again, *pro iniusta dolacione viridum arborum, de obstruccionē aquarum a molendinis regiis*, or even *de piscione laganarum*—for the baking of cakes for sale was deemed an intolerably frivolous luxury. One man might appear before the magistrates because *noluit intrare prisonam*, another because *exiuit prisonam sine licencia*, and a third because *vendidit bona sua de naue sua, parua custuma non soluta*.

In 1317 a *domus lapidea* (obviously rare in those days of wooden building) was rented for 20s. sterling per annum (p. 11),² but, in general, the prices that prevailed in the years 1398-1407 were very low. The boll of malt fluctuated between 2s. 6d. and 4s.,³ that of corn between 3s. and 4s.; meal (*farina*) is entered at 3s. (p. 143), and salt at 26s. a chalder (p. 148). Wine varied between 4d. and 6d. a pint. An ox might be valued at 8s. or, again, one merk (pp. 145, 199), a cow at 12s. (p. 31), while a horse was presumably very cheap at 6s. 8d., reasonable enough at 12s., and dear at 24s. (pp. 64, 138, 152). A doublet is recorded as being worth 8s. and a *toga longa* 20s. (p. 36), a feather-bed and bolster 4s., a saddle 2s. or 2s. 8d., eight ells of 'grene clath & blew' 12s. 6d., and a basin and laver 2s. 3d. (p. 175). For building the tolbooth (*pretorium*) in 1407, each indweller was to give one day's labour or 4d. in money (p. 238). The last entry shows the yearly revenue of Aberdeen (burdened with much the largest feu-ferme in the kingdom) standing at £238 5s.⁴

The social inferiority of the craftsmen, implicit in the dominant position of the merchant gild, is expressly confirmed in several entries. In October 1398 the weavers were enjoined to refrain from making *conspiracionem inter se in preiudicium communitatis* (p. 27). Five weeks later, exception was taken to a man's fitness to plead, *quia fuit nisi semihomo, quia textor*; to which deadly thrust the mild riposte was offered that he was indeed *sufficiens homo*, enjoying the liberty of the burgh, though not of the gild (pp. 32-33). And surely the stigma of the menial, the second-rate, attaches to some of the by-names given to craftsmen—'Willelmus baxter mykyl', 'Willelmus taillour Blacberd'.

¹ Cf. p. 102 for a Whitsunday *prima ordinance quod quicunque inuenerit porcos in blado suo capiet eos tanquam escaeta*.

² It is noteworthy that a half-year's rent of a house in 1400 was put no higher than 21d. (p. 162).

³ In February 1399/1400 a distinction was drawn between the price of malt made *in villa* (3s. 6d.) and *in patria* (3s.)—that is, the surrounding rural district (p. 129).

⁴ The annual *assedacio reddituum burgi* brought in sums ranging from £174 6s. 8d. (in 1398) to £221 13s. 4d. (in 1399): pp. 82-84, 166-71.

This text, full of good things, can be read and enjoyed with more ease than is usual with such documents. If the reader has a complaint, it might turn on the austere standard of the editing. We would, for example, have welcomed glosses on such terms as *anelans* (p. 4), *sinapium* (p. 40), *monile* (pp. 41, 58), *stillicigium* (pp. 74, 217), and even for *garçifer* and *cultellum* (both of frequent occurrence). With this single and not very damaging qualification, the reviewer cannot but applaud the careful editing.

Valuable as it is in its own right, the text is surpassed in interest by the introduction,¹ for with *Aberdeen* Professor Dickinson completes a trilogy that began as long ago as 1928 with *Fife* and was carried a stage further in 1937 with his *Carnwath*. It is not too much to say that the introductions to these three works, each of them a model of analysis and exposition, have laid the foundation for our understanding of the basic local institutions of medieval Scotland.

The introduction (provided with its own index) is a closely reasoned, well articulated and fully documented examination of the essence and the role of the early burgh, with the 'self-elective' Act of 1469 as its approximate *terminus ad quem*. While disavowing any intention of writing a new history of Aberdeen, Professor Dickinson draws heavily on the records, both printed and unpublished, of that burgh, and above all on his own text; the *Early Records* are, indeed, the mainstay of his introduction. The MS. resources of Aberdeen are supplemented by those of Ayr and Haddington, while much evidence is adduced from the printed records of such other burghs as Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Irvine, Lanark, Peebles and Stirling. State records, ecclesiastical registers, lay chartularies and the 'institutional' writers are all made to pay tribute, and (an impressive feature of the survey) many an apt analogy is found among commentaries on the English, Welsh, Irish and Continental boroughs. Here and there detailed points made by earlier Scottish writers, like David Murray and W. Mackay Mackenzie, are discussed, and the works of Gross, Ballard and Neilson are used, but less reference is made than might be expected to the author's predecessors; yet he may be absolved from any charge of want of generosity to his forerunners. Apparently he chose to go straight to the sources, disregarding the (often fanciful) interpretations of other scholars and antiquaries, and to build *de novo* on a solid base of ascertained and tested fact.

The survey opens with a re-examination of the historic link between the early castle, sheriffdom and burgh (section I), which leads, in turn, to the burgh as a trading settlement, with a need for protection (II), to the nature of burghal privilege (III) and to the built-up area of the incorporated town, with its restricted population (IV). There follow appraisals of the burgh as a community, with its own seal (V),

¹ In which many of the foregoing points are noted and examined.

of burgage tenure and burghal rents (VI), of what Maitland called 'tenurial heterogeneity' (VII), and of burgh alienations and feu-ferme status (VIII). We proceed next, by way of the early *prepositi* and *ballivi*, the 'dousane' and 'quest' (IX), to the interlocking merchant gild and town council, and to the statute of 1469 (X). The functions of gild court and burgh court (XI) lead on to the nature and incidence of court meetings (XII), and to the proceedings thereat—criminal, quasi-criminal and civil (XIII). 'Extraordinary' grants of sheriffship and commissions of justiciary are briefly reviewed (XIV), as are the chamberlain ayre, the *Curia Quattuor Burgorum* and the antecedents of the Convention (XV); and the burgesses' military service (or its commutation) (XVI) brings us full cycle, through release from shrieval control, to the starting-point of the administrative nexus between burgh and sheriffdom (XVII).

This summary may serve to suggest the wide reach of the study; it is the most exhaustive examination of the ancient Scottish burgh that has ever been undertaken. Especially noteworthy is the author's hardihood in facing obscurities that have led others to take evasive action. Professor Dickinson has outstanding passages on the significance of the 'year and a day' (=four head courts) as the period for the recovery of a burgage, waste, indistrainable and in default of rent (pp. xxxv, cxx); on the small size of the medieval burghs, few of which ran to four figures before the sixteenth century (pp. xlv-xlvii); on the use of burgh seals (pp. l-li); on the granting of tofts in the king's burghs to abbots and feudal magnates, with some consequent 'conflict of jurisdictions' (pp. lxi-lxvi); on the retention by the king of his right to escheats in feu-ferme tenure, and on the implication, in that status, of financial autonomy but *not* of self-government or of independence from royal supervision (pp. lxxv-lxxvi).

With an illuminating account of the evolution of *prepositi* and *ballivi*, the author shows, tentatively but with a wealth of documentation, what is probably the truth in a difficult subject: these officers, originally the king's nominees, came in the reign of William the Lion to be chosen from among the burgesses, and, by the time of Robert I (but independently of any move towards feu-ferme), were elected by the burgesses from their own number at the Michaelmas head court (pp. lxxx-lxxxi). So, too, the evolution of assise, jury, quest or dousane, and possibly of a standing body, annually elected and acting in alienations, into a council, attending to all matters touching 'the utility and common profit of the town', is clearly expounded (pp. lxxxv-lxxxvii). The shift of emphasis, in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century gild, from cloth-making to the export of wool, woollfells and hides is shown as the prelude to that development whereby the merchants came to be the 'real burgesses' and the craftsmen, unless they foreswore their craft, were deemed

menial and secondary, so that the gild nearly equalled *communitas* (pp. xcvi-ciii). Confusion and overlapping between gild, council and court functions occurred because 'the same few men dominated' all three (pp. cvii-cxvi). While alderman, bailies, sergeants and others were appointed at Aberdeen by the Michaelmas head court, the council was probably (and certainly by 1441) appointed by the gild on the Friday following that court (pp. cxviii-cxx).

Faced by so much apt documentation, sound learning, astute interpretation and sheer common sense, the critic who would presume to fault this work would be bold to the point of rashness; yet the author's very range invites challenge, if only on points of fine detail. That Auchterarder 'virtually disappeared as a royal burgh' after 1332, or even after its presence in Exchequer in 1408 (p. xxiii, note 6), seems most doubtful. A charter of 1362 x 1390 bore the burgh seal and was witnessed by two burgesses,¹ while Auchterarder was one of 17 burghs north of Forth included in the stent-roll of 1483.² It is true that in 1581 action was taken (or proposed) to arrest the decay of this 'frie burgh regall',³ but it is also very likely that it was represented in Parliament on 22 August 1584 (for the first and only time).⁴ It seems best to ascribe the decline of Auchterarder, a place of some importance in medieval Scotland, to the sixteenth century. The implication (pp. xxxiii-xxxiv) that 'kirset' or *hersetum*—a rent-free grace-period for the building-up of a burghal tenement—was in general use is not readily supportable from existing evidence: *pace* the 'Laws of the Four Burghs' (where it is fixed at one year), it seems to occur only at Dumbarton (five years) and Dingwall (ten years). Again, the statement (p. lvii, note 2) that the Ayr burgess paid 12d. a year for his toft and his rights in the burgh's common lands, while accurate in itself, might with advantage be amplified, for the payment was not so much a variant rate of 'assessment' as an enhanced rent for a greatly 'reinforced' toft.⁵ To the burghs noted as 'mediatised' to subject-superiors (pp. lxix-lxx) might be added Jedburgh,⁶ Dingwall,⁷ Kirkcudbright⁸ and Fyvie,⁹ but probably Dundee is wrongly included here, for, like Inverurie, it is in a

¹ *Charters of Inchaffray* (Scot. Hist. Soc.), 131; cf. *Lib. Ins. Miss.* (Bannatyne Club), 37.

² *Recs. Conv. R. Burghs*, i, 543.

³ *A.P.S.*, iii, 239-40.

⁴ The record is admittedly imperfect, but it is hard to see how else we should interpret the entry that John Graham of Callander sat as member for 'ouchter ...' (*ibid.*, 335).

⁵ A. I. Dunlop (ed.), *The Royal Burgh of Ayr* (1963), 12.

⁶ Fraser, *Douglas Book*, iii, 355, no. 288; cf. *R.M.S.*, i, App. ii, 288.

⁷ *Ibid.*, i, App. ii, 370, 380; cf. *A.P.S.*, i, 477.

⁸ There is seemingly no record evidence as to its alienation, but see Chalmers, *Caledonia*, iii, 275, and P.H. McKelvie, *Lands and their Owners in Galloway*, iv, 167, for the highly probable local tradition to this effect.

⁹ In 1397 it was conveyed by Herries of Terregles to Sir Henry de Prestoun: *R.M.S.*, i, App. i, 157, and App. ii, 1938, 1939.

different category: there is no evidence that these two places, when conveyed by William to his brother, Earl David, were already burghs.¹

These are, perhaps, mere *trivia*,² straws that show that Professor Dickinson has raised a brisk wind with his penetrating and thought-provoking analysis. It is so good that here and there one is tempted—greedily enough—to wish for yet further enlightenment. For example, his plan leads him to touch but lightly on the distinction—or lack of it—between the king's burghs and those of the church and baronage in the days before the institution of the burgh of barony brought sharp differentiation: it is a subject that would bear closer examination than it has yet received. This is in a real sense a measure of the quality of the present work: like all sound constitutional studies, it will inspire others to explore its by-ways. *Early Records of Aberdeen* is assured of its place as the basic study of the ancient Scottish burgh.

GEORGE S. PRYDE.³

THE COUNTY OF SELKIRK⁴

To all who are interested in the archaeology and history of the Highland Zone of Britain, the publication of a report by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland is an event of cardinal importance. For here in county, or regional, format, is given a wealth of detail not readily available elsewhere and containing much that is recorded for the first time.

The present volume illustrates once again how well Scotland has been served by the Royal Commission with its relatively small but experienced staff of field investigators, draughtsmen and scholars; not only is it the fifteenth in the series, but it maintains the enviable standard of scholarship which has distinguished these inventories ever since their inception some fifty years ago. In this respect Scotland must rank among the foremost of European countries engaged in the recording of their national heritage.

Selkirkshire is one of the smaller border counties lying in the high mountainous terrain of south-east Scotland; an area sparsely

¹ *Chartulary of Lindores* (Scot. Hist. Soc.), 1 (1178 × 1182); for later deeds, mentioning burghal status, *ibid.*, 3-4, 103, 181-2.

² Even more captiously, one might point to the oddity of using the French term 'Gand' in place of the customary 'Ghent' (p. lxxxii, note 4), or to an apparent typographical slip at p. lxxviii, note 6, where it is said that 'Invereren may be Blervie'.

³ Professor of Scottish History and Literature in the University of Glasgow.

⁴ *An Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Selkirkshire*. pp. xxiv, 185. Edinburgh: H.M. Stationery office. 1957. £3 7s. 6d.

populated in prehistory, lying between the two frontier Walls in the Roman period, and governed by forest laws in medieval times. It is not surprising therefore that it contains fewer monuments (204 are listed and described) than other areas of comparable size. Owing to rigorous conditions, superficial traces of early habitation and fortified sites have been in many instances almost entirely obliterated. Thanks to aerial photography, however, a number of such sites have been identified and are here described for the first time. Aerial reconnaissance on this scale must have added greatly to the burden of fieldwork involved; and it is very much to the Commission's credit that the latest discoveries (1951-5) are not only incorporated for the present county but also listed separately for marginal land throughout the greater part of Scotland south of the Tay and the Highland foothills (pp. xiv-xviii).

The Inventory is preceded by an Introduction describing the topography, natural resources, and medieval administration of the county, together with a history of the burgh of Selkirk. Part II of the Introduction presents the cultural and historical background of the several classes of monuments described. Culturally a close affinity exists with the neighbouring county of Roxburgh and the relative parts of the Introduction to the recently published Inventory on that county are reprinted (as Appendix 'C') for easy reference.

It was largely due to poor soils in a broken mountainous terrain that the area provided little inducement to settlers in prehistoric times. Only a few scattered finds indicate the presence of Mesolithic and Neolithic communities. From the succeeding Early Bronze Age a few short cists and cairns are recorded, but future excavation may prove that the unenclosed stone-walled hut circles at Kirkstead (No. 132), Dryhope (No. 133) and Cavers Hill (No. 134) also belong to this period. Excellent distribution maps illustrate some sporadic penetration in the Middle Bronze Age, with more widespread activity apparent in the Late Bronze Age from an increased number of stray finds.

The Iron Age (from 100 B.C.) is better represented by a series of sites, principally forts, occupying the crests of spurs or ridges between the 500 and 1,200 ft. contours. Reference here to the Roxburgh Inventory gives grounds for linking them with the better known contour-forts to the south-east where evidence indicates that hillfort construction reached its maximum in the years immediately preceding the Roman penetration of A.D. 80.

Selkirkshire, in Roman times, did not lie on any trunk-road system and differed in this respect from Roxburghshire which is traversed by Dere Street. Roman influence was largely transient in this territory of the *Selgovae* whose memory is commemorated in the county name. The Oakwood Fort (No. 130) established in the Ettrick Valley indicates a local line of penetration. As recent exca-

vation has shown, it was big enough to accommodate a cohort 500-strong during the Flavian period. It was not re-occupied in Antonine times and, during the intervening years, probably shortly after the beginning of the second century A.D., one of the few Lowland brochs was built at Torwoodlee above the Gala Water.

When Roman power waned and the allied Kingdoms of the Votadini and Dumnonii emerged after A.D. 369 as political units, a native re-occupation of the area is apparent. Graves of this period contained no Roman objects but by the early sixth century two chieftains of 'The Men of the North' were commemorated on the famous Yarrow Stone (No. 174) by a Christian epitaph in Latin. In a careful analysis of this inscription by Mr C. A. Raleigh Radford and Professor K. H. Jackson its exact meaning in terms of modern scholarship is described for the first time, and its place assured in the Early Christian series of inscribed stones found principally in Wales and Cornwall. Though no trace of a church or monastic settlement of this period is yet recorded, the Yarrow Stone infers the presence of some such establishment, borne out by the evidence of the hermit devotee now recognised in the remarkable figure on the stone at Over Kirkhope (No. 65). This native society was swept away by Anglian invaders in the sixth/seventh centuries, and it is to this period of Anglian penetration that the linear earthwork, the Picts' Work Ditch running across the lower valleys of Ettrick, Tweed and Gala, is attributed in a special study (Appendix 'A' pp. 126-7).

In medieval times Selkirkshire was probably unique among Lowland counties in its lack of any abbey, priory, collegiate church or hospital. This lack, as suggested, may well have been due to the removal of Selkirk Abbey (the presumed site at Lindean (No. 3) awaits excavation) to Kelso, and, with the abbeys of Kelso and Melrose holding between them much of the county, the area had little attraction for other foundations. The brief history of Selkirk Abbey is therefore all the more interesting. It is known that Earl David founded a monastery 'at Selkirk', probably in 1119, having brought a small colony of monks for that purpose from the house of reformed Benedictines at Tiron in the Diocese of Chartres. Having discovered that the place was 'not suitable for an abbey' David, acting on the advice of the Bishop of Glasgow, transferred his foundation to Kelso before 1128. The house retained its original grant of lands and thus, although the monks were removed, their influence remained. The lands were probably on the right bank of the Ettrick, and of the Tweed immediately after its confluence with the Ettrick a little below the modern town of Selkirk, while fishing rights and the use of woods and common in the immediate neighbourhood were also included in the grant. The land was largely arable, being some of the most fertile in the county, and from Kelso the monks estab-

lished granges at Faldonside, Whitmuir and Whitelaw to manage their property which provided them with money-rents and certain labour services. Malcolm IV granted the monks of Melrose rights of pannage and freedom to take fuel and wood throughout the whole Forest of Selkirk, though that abbey's lands were mainly confined to the present parish of Ettrick. The only other ecclesiastical body with considerable interests in the county was the cathedral church of Glasgow which appears to have held nearly the whole of the present parish of Ashkirk and to have possessed a 'palace' at Woll about a mile west of the present village (No. 48).

Secular monuments of this period include three mottes, that at Selkirk with its large bailey (No. 24) being presumably the site of the royal castle and occasional residence of Scottish Kings until the reign of Alexander III. The castle controlled 'The Forest' which comprised the greater part of the county with the exception of the abbey lands. Thus, with most of the county in the possession either of the Crown or of an abbey, it is not surprising that the baronial castle, so common in other parts of Scotland, is hardly met with here. The only exception is the castle of Newark (No. 44) on the Yarrow Water, which was built in the early fifteenth century, doubtless to replace an 'old wark' which may have been built after Robert I's grant to James, Lord Douglas, of the forests of Selkirk, Ettrick and Traquair.

The administrative organisation of 'The Forest' is the subject of a valuable study in the Introduction (pp. 4-9) with a wealth of detail not easily obtainable elsewhere. Forming part of a large area of royal demesne it was erected in the twelfth century into a royal 'Forest' to preserve it as a hunting ground for the King. After passing from the Crown to the Douglas family it remained with them until the forfeiture of James, ninth Earl Douglas, in 1455. Owing to its border situation, however, it was frequently in English hands and was the subject of grants to different people by both English and Scottish kings at the same time. After 1455 it remained with the Crown, although it was granted as a dower to Margaret, wife of James III, and later to Margaret Tudor. In the latter half of the fifteenth century its organisation may be followed from the Exchequer Rolls. Three wards were constituted (Ettrick, Yarrow and Tweed) each divided into a number of 'forest steads'—the approximate positions of these steads being plotted in Fig. 3 of the Inventory. These were let on tacks of three or five years in return for annual money payments together with a fixed number of cattle and lambs. The holders seem also to have been responsible for the provision of 'twa bowis and a sper with hors and ger'. Forest courts were held at Newark twice a year at the festivals of Beltane and All Hallows, and were presided over by the Chancellor and Comptroller with a clerk of the Forest Courts; but in the late fifteenth century

they were increasingly held by Lords Commissioners appointed by the King, thereby emphasising their financial character. Following the Douglas forfeiture the King was frequently at Newark, and references occur to the carriage of venison, the payment of grooms and smiths, and the upkeep of the royal stable, all indicating that the Forest was still looked upon as a place for hunting and relaxation. There is evidence, however, that it could also supplement the royal revenue by providing pasturage for the King's sheep.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the holders of Forest steads began to obtain charters of feu-ferme, it became worthwhile for the first time to put up substantial dwellings. This change witnessed the break-up of medieval Selkirkshire and the rise to power of a new gentry and aristocracy. It saw the emergence as prosperous landowners of great border families such as the Scotts and the Pringles. In many cases their rise seems to have been at the expense of the monks of Melrose, whose lands were falling into lay hands. The substantial dwellings which arose followed the rectangular and 'L' shaped plans of the traditional keep or defended tower-house in other parts of Scotland. The notable examples at Oakwood (No. 31) Dryhope (No. 40) and Kirkhope (No. 32) are fully described and attention is drawn to the fragmentary remains of others.

The more graceful living enjoyed by these border families in the eighteenth century is exemplified in a few large houses of which Yair (No. 22) is undoubtedly the finest. This was built by Alexander Pringle in 1788, and it was others of that ilk who built Torwoodlee (No. 19) and the Haining (No. 25), the latter with palatial stabling in conformity with the fashion of the period.

The county town, or burgh of Selkirk, is the subject of special study (pp. 11-14). Though little is known of its origin it is probable that a settlement already existed just to the north of the motte-and-bailey castle erected by David I. By 1366 it appears on record as a royal burgh and carried the Royal Arms on its seal by 1426. In 1536 a royal charter re-erected the burgh with certain privileges, and four years later it was erected into a sheriffdom within itself. This latter charter also granted the burgh the right to construct walls, ditches and moats, since, owing to its proximity to 'England, Liddesdale, and other broken parts', it had, in the past, oft been burned, sacked and destroyed.

With almost continuous burgh records from about 1635, we can learn much of burgh affairs during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By the latter half of the eighteenth century the burgh was gaining something of the appearance it preserves today; the old walls and gateways or ports were being demolished and oil lamps were being introduced for street lighting.

Little is known of Selkirk's medieval trade but reference is made to the disposal of the wool from the King's sheep in the middle of the

sixteenth century. Houses apparently existed for storing the wool before its carriage to Leith. In the seventeenth century various crafts received seals-of-cause—weavers, shoemakers, tailors, fleshers and hammermen. Selkirk was not, however, a flourishing trading community, and at the end of the seventeenth century the annual 'common good' was only £2,242 13s. 4d. (Scots) as against an accumulated deficit of over £25,000. Attempts were made to foster 'manufactureys' but these grew very slowly and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the textile industry was established on any appreciable scale.

The meticulous scholarship, the superb draftsmanship of the numerous plans and the high quality of the plates (the text is illustrated by some 127 line drawings and half-tone plates) renders this volume not only an indispensable source of reference but a constant joy to the student in the field. It is significant that of the seven reports published by the Royal Commission in Scotland since the war no less than four are already out of print. It is to be hoped that for the Commission's future volumes Her Majesty's Stationery Office may be persuaded to increase the number of printed copies in order to meet a well merited and popular demand.

J. R. C. HAMILTON.¹

SHORT NOTICES

ABERDEEN COUNCIL LETTERS. Vol. V. Transcribed and Edited by Louise B. Taylor. Pp. xxiv, 515. London: Oxford University Press. 1957. 50s.

Miss Taylor continues to progress through the great mass of letters in the 'mekill kist' of Aberdeen. Those ranging from 1552 to 1633 Miss Taylor transcribed and edited in 1942, and since then four more volumes have been issued. The fifth and present volume covers the period 1670-5.

The bulk of these letters concerns the trade and industry of the city and certain litigations which deeply exercised the minds of the Council. We see the Council sending three of their number to represent the city in the Convention of Royal Burghs in order to safeguard the community in the measures affecting Aberdeen, and to use all means for securing victory in the Court of Session. There they are to co-operate with the Town's junior counsel, William Moir and their Agent, Sir James Elphinstone, W. S., and they are given instructions to employ as senior counsel, Sir George Mackenzie who, if he chance to be already engaged by the

¹ H.M. Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

other side, is nevertheless to be offered a fee 'under promise not to press too hard the case against the town'. The Council's second choice was Sir George Lockhart and it was he who acted for the town. The Instructions further required the three to 'solicit' the Lords of Session for their favourable views and, where necessary, clerks and others, who were to be paid for what they might do—legally or illegally—to help the Town in gaining their lawsuits.

The two most important of these actions were against the University and a turbulent laird, Irvine. The University had opposed the Town in the appointment of a librarian to the University, which the Town maintained belonged to them, and after some undignified conduct on both sides, the question remained to be decided by the Court. The action against the laird was for payment for damage done to the building by Irvine in effecting his escape from the Town Tolbooth.

From the Instructions given by the Council one gathers that the members were arrogant and vindictive, resolved, no matter what the costs might be, to obtain victory over their opponents.

The letters are frequent, copious and entertaining, especially those of Bailie Molleson who invariably mentions in his correspondence nostalgic longings. In his first epistle he writes, 'I am sorry ye were so wearied of me as to send me to this place; to Bailie Alexander who loves talking it means long life.' In another, 'If I stay long here ye sall do weill to send me a pair of new legges.' That one can understand and appreciate; it was tiring to go from court to court in the Outer and the Inner House in search of counsel and agents, and later traverse the steep closes of the High Street and climb the dark turnpike stairs in the hope of finding a judge at home prepared to undergo 'solicitation'.

Molleson laments the sums of money spent on lawyers and their servants: 'The money here dissolves as snow before the sun.' Again he refers to it: 'I long exceedingly to be from here because money melts away with advocates and their servants, as also to other clerks.'

But he is sure everything is going to turn out in favour of the Town; judges are evidently sympathetic and Counsel encouraging. The Town Council, attentive to all the reports sent to them, censure and dismiss Mr Moir, their junior counsel, for having neglected to appear in court at one stage, though Moir assured them he had stayed out on the advice of Sir George Lockhart, the senior counsel.

The town's rosy hopes were gone; instead of victory they had met defeat. And to add to their annoyance Provost Petrie had disgraced the 'brave toun' by being sent to prison in Edinburgh Tolbooth.

Poor Petrie! He had gone to Edinburgh as member of Parliament for the city of Aberdeen, and had ridden his horse in the great procession known as the 'Riding of the Parliament', clad in municipal robe and with the expensive footmantle customary on these occasions,

an article which the Council ordered to be returned as soon as the ceremony was over. He had looked after the city's affairs in Parliament and in the Convention and, finding himself in a minority who thought it right to petition Charles II to summon a new Parliament, had addressed a letter to Charles which brought him and the other signatories to repent their action, for the King, resenting this letter, gave orders for the arrest and imprisonment of the signatories. One cannot but feel sorry for the unfortunate Provost who was thus treated by the King and by his old associates in the Council who, having fawned upon Charles, disowned association with their Provost, declared him unfit for the office and debarred him from holding any office in the city in the years to come.

The Provost's imprisonment was singular. On his first entry through the gloomy portals he examined the bed and disliking it he went out in search of a suitable one and, having got it, resigned himself to his confinement which lasted until it pleased the King to release him and then only after paying a fine of £1,000.

The letters, interesting to readers remote from Aberdeen, must have an intimate appeal for those acquainted with its history. They nevertheless disappoint in one respect. The writers had frequently met and talked to Sir George Mackenzie and Sir George Lockhart, about whose characters we have been told elsewhere. How did they appear to Messrs Petrie, Alexander and Molleson?

And did you once see Shelley plain?
And did he stop and speak with you?
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

Nor did any of the three say anything of the appearance of the great Hall of Parliament House. In the intervals of the sessions of the Parliament, it was known as the Outer House of the Court of Session where, amidst a multitude of talking, walking and laughing men, judges and advocates strained voices and ears in their efforts to make themselves heard in the debates that went on in their courts by the east wall and the south.

The various matters related in the letters have been neatly summarised by Miss Taylor in her comprehensive and masterly Introduction. Nothing appears to have been overlooked, and where difficulty arises in the text of some letters there is always an explanatory note.

C. A. MALCOLM.

THE CHRONICLE OF WALTER OF GUISBOROUGH. Edited by Harry Rothwell. Pp. xlii, 409. Royal Historical Society (Camden series, No. lxxxix). 1957.

A new edition of the chronicle of Walter of Guisborough (better known as Walter of Hemingburgh), based on a collation of all known manuscripts, is a welcome event.

An account of earlier editions of this chronicle, which is an important source for the reign of Edward I, reads like a commentary on the study of literary sources. Edited first in 1687 by Gale from a manuscript which is now missing, the chronicle was re-edited by Hearne from College of Arms MS. N.13 in the eighteenth century. Though other excellent manuscripts survive, the College of Arms manuscript dominated later studies. It formed the basis of Hamilton's edition of 1848-9, and forty years later its readings were revised by Liebermann. A critical edition utilising all the known manuscripts has long been necessary, and this Professor Rothwell supplies. His text is likely to prove definitive.

The chronicle of the Austin canon of Guisborough (the name Hemingburgh is found only in the colophon of one manuscript, Lansdowne 239, reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume) survives in ten manuscripts which can be classified by length. Considerable portions of the chronicle were worked into Knighton's chronicle at Leicester, and into the Osney-Abingdon compilations. An important part of Professor Rothwell's introduction deals with the relationship of these surviving texts. His conclusion is that a text which he names β , the earliest recoverable text, lies behind the College of Arms version, and is 'the source of all known manuscripts of the chronicle proper'. This text, reconstructed from different combinations of manuscripts, forms the basis of the present edition.

Guisborough's sources have been carefully analysed. For the early part of his history he was indebted to such writers as William of Newburgh. More significant are his borrowings after 1290 where his chronicle is supposedly an original source. Of particular interest here is the relationship between Guisborough's account of Anglo-Scottish affairs under Edward I, and the account contained in another northern chronicle (MS. Harleian 3860). Joseph Stevenson, who printed part of the Harleian chronicle in *Wallace Papers*, thought that it formed Guisborough's source for this period. Professor Rothwell considers that the two chronicles used a common source. It is perhaps worth noting that the unpublished chronicle of Thomas of Castelford, which survives in a unique manuscript at Göttingen, and which contains several entries on Anglo-Scottish history, has similarities with the Harleian chronicle. Walter of Coventry in the first part of his history used an account similar to the opening of the Harleian chronicle. The relationship of this group of northern chronicles deserves further study.

A different problem concerns the continuations of the Guisborough chronicle. Professor Rothwell suggests that from 1305 onwards the present text is the work of a continuator possibly from Durham. He rejects the continuation covering the years 1327 to 1347, sometimes attributed to Guisborough, which was printed by Hearne and Hamilton. This continuation is found together with the full text of Guisborough only in a sixteenth-century transcript. It is a rough version of the *Historia Aurea* which was used as a continuation in several fourteenth-century chronicles. It was a 'standard continuation' and formed no part of Guisborough's original text.

Professor Rothwell's edition throughout is a model of careful scholarship. One small point, however, may be mentioned in connection with that part of Guisborough preserved in Knighton, and known as 'Leycestrensis'. Though there were Leicester chronicles other than Knighton, is 'Leycestrensis' 'a longer manuscript' as Professor Rothwell says (p. xxxiv) or is it, as recently suggested, simply that part of Knighton not found in the *Polychronicon*?

The most interesting part of the introduction concerns the historical value of Guisborough's chronicle. Walter of Guisborough is traditionally the great chronicler of Edward I's later years. Tout's Edward I comes in part from this source. Professor Rothwell gives a new assessment of Guisborough's value. He shows that the chronicle is not reliable as a detailed guide to events in Edward's reign. An analysis of the well-known part which describes the attitude of the opposition party during the crisis of 1296-7 reveals many errors. Professor Rothwell concludes that much of the chronicle's merit lies in its statement of northern opinion, as set down by a man who was writing shortly after 1300.

There can be no doubt that much of this judgment will stand, and the stress on the chronicle as a record of contemporary thought and opinion is most valuable. The late Middle Ages was a period when national viewpoints were developing, and in the north, where Walter of Guisborough lived, the wider tolerances of Ailred's day were clearly passing by the end of the thirteenth century. This can be seen in the chronicles. The first part of Walter of Coventry's *Memoriale* shows the manner in which history was used politically at the time of the war with Scotland. Peter Langtoft has been described as 'one of the most violent Scotophobe historians of all time'. Against this sort of background, Walter of Guisborough emerges as a writer who avoided extremes. Though he accepted Edward's policies, his outlook on northern affairs was more moderate than that of many of his contemporaries.

As a detailed narrative of events in the south during Edward's reign, Guisborough's chronicle no longer looks quite so convincing. Its account of Anglo-Scottish affairs, however, is still valuable. For this part of his chronicle Guisborough used a source which was well-

informed upon northern history. The fact that this is missing, gives his own narrative a greater value. The documents which he quotes on Anglo-Scottish history, and which include the Latin form of Brabazon's statement, add to the interest of his chronicle. Finally the space which Guisborough devotes to northern history reveals his interests. Yorkshire chronicles were at this time much concerned with northern history, and their pages mirror, from an increasingly 'English' viewpoint, the passage of these events.

Professor Rothwell's edition will advance knowledge on the reign of Edward I by forcing a reconsideration of the value of this source.

JOHN TAYLOR.

ACCOUNTS OF THE MASTERS OF WORKS FOR BUILDING AND REPAIRING
ROYAL PALACES AND CASTLES, Vol. I, 1529-1615. Edited by
Henry M. Paton. Pp. lxviii, 423. Edinburgh: Her Majesty's
Stationery Office. 1957. £6 6s.

Building accounts are a class of record of which comparatively few examples are available in print. Despite their value for the architectural and economic historian none of the great collection of medieval English building accounts in the Public Record Office has been the subject of an official publication, and even the *List and Index* produced in 1912 is far from satisfactory. While the wholesale publication of such documents is not necessarily to be advocated, and would certainly, in present circumstances, be impracticable, it is clearly desirable that some of the more important should be printed in an authoritative fashion. Those responsible for the volume under review are therefore to be congratulated upon a venture which makes architectural history in more senses than one. It is to be the first of three giving the text of the accounts of the Masters of Works to the Kings of Scotland from 1529 to the Act of Union. No accounts of an earlier date have been preserved, and even in the seventeenth century there are serious gaps in the series. Those accounts that survive are, however, sufficient to furnish much information about Scottish building practice under the Stewarts, and they had already been consulted in manuscript by McGibbon and Ross in that admirably documented work, *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, by Professors Knoop and Jones, and by the staff of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments. Their publication will, therefore, make available to a wider circle of scholars a series of documents whose historical value has already been amply demonstrated. Work upon these records was in fact begun over twenty years ago by the late Dr Mackay Mackenzie, but his death and the intervention of the war delayed their publication. The first volume has now appeared as a Stationery Office Publication under the editorship of Mr H. M. Paton.

In publishing documents of this nature the editor is confronted by many practical problems of presentation: how to deal with Roman numerals, often complicated typographically by superior characters: how to reconcile the irregularities of a manuscript with the consistency of a printed page: whether to condense repetitive sections and risk leaving out something significant, or to set them out in full and waste both paper and the reader's time. It is one thing to transcribe for one's own use a document in a mixture of Scots and Latin, and quite another to print it in a form in which it will be clearly intelligible to another. All these difficulties Mr Paton and the Stationery Office have successfully overcome. Only one document has been in any way abbreviated (by summarising repetitive lists of workmen in an appendix), and each page is conveniently headed by the date and the name of the building concerned. As for the text itself, it is a sufficient guarantee of its accuracy that it has been checked and counterchecked by the Record Office staff.

So far as the accounts themselves are concerned, the reader may therefore be assured that what he has before him is an accurate substitute for the original manuscript. Upon what editorial assistance can he count in endeavouring to understand these 376 pages of mixed Latin and Scots, replete with obsolete technical terms and quaintly eccentric spellings? A useful glossary and a competent index help him to find his way about the text, and an introduction of sixty-two pages tells him what it contains under tabulated headings such as 'Sources of Income', 'Periods of Building Activity', and 'Conditions of Labour'. In fulfilling this part of his task the editor has leaned heavily upon previous writers and upon notes left by Dr Mackenzie. The result is a compilation rather than an original contribution to knowledge. This would not greatly matter were the essential facts in the history of the royal works in Scotland already well established. This, unfortunately, is not the case, and Mr Paton's introduction, while clearing up many questions, leaves others unanswered. What, for instance, was the precise relationship between the accounts of the Master of Works and those of the Lord High Treasurer? On this point, vital to any architectural historian making use of this volume, the editor merely observes that the former 'are supplementary to and interwoven with' the latter, a statement as vague as it is unhelpful. On the office of Master of Works itself the introduction is more informative. As in England, the title of *magister operis* originally indicated the chief master craftsman of an important building enterprise: but by the middle of the fifteenth century it was being given to clerics who performed the purely administrative functions which in England earned them the style of 'clerk of the works'. Many of the sixteenth-century 'Masters of Works' whose accounts appear in this volume were in fact clerks, and it was not until the appointment of William Schaw in 1583 as 'grit maister of wark' that the post was

once more held by a man with professional qualifications as an architect or craftsman. In the same way the last clerk to be surveyor of works to the king of England had in 1532 been superseded by a layman who was a carpenter by trade. Thus in Scotland, as in England, the sixteenth century saw the secularisation of one branch of the Civil Service. The history of the office in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is obscure, and it is to be hoped that later introductions will elucidate the administrative arrangements for the maintenance of royal buildings in Scotland after the Act of Union. The enactments listed by Mr Paton on p. xxx all relate primarily to the Office of Works in England, and how (if at all) they applied to Scotland is by no means clear.

To turn from the builders to the buildings: those principally concerned are the Palaces of Falkland, Linlithgow and Holyroodhouse, and the castles of Edinburgh, Stirling and Tantallon. Architecturally, the most important works recorded in this volume are probably those at Holyroodhouse, begun by James IV in 1501, but not completed until the reign of his successor. For these works we have surviving accounts for 1529-30, 1531-2, 1535-6, 1537-8 and 1538-9. Of this sixteenth-century palace only the north-west tower still exists, but its slow construction can be followed year by year in the accounts, from the building of the 'gret chalmer' to the gilding of the king's arms, and from the provision of stone and timber to the collecting of those shells which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were often used to level up the courses of ashlar masonry (p. 55). In the Falkland accounts we find the names of some of the French masons and carvers who built the new front in the François I style for James V, and payments for plumbing in connection with the fountain. Unfortunately the payments for the making of the great fountain at Linlithgow are lost, but an account for £1,973 records some of the work which so much impressed Mary of Guise in 1538. The historian of the castles of Edinburgh and Stirling will also find much original material in this volume, and there is more to come in its successors.

As an addendum to the introduction the reader is presented with the Latin text of part of an account for the construction of the Edwardian Peel at Linlithgow. This roll, formerly in the possession of Dr George Neilson, was presented to the Scottish Record Office by J. H. Stevenson, K.C., in 1919. No doubt the donor was unaware that it was a stray from the records of the English Exchequer, and appears, indeed, to be closely related to a document now listed at the Public Record Office as E101/482/20. While welcoming the publication of the fragment now in Edinburgh, an English reviewer may perhaps be permitted to wonder whether the authorities at the Register House might not suffer it to be reunited with its fellow-membranes in Chancery Lane, thus setting an example of disin-

terestedness unhappily all too rare among the custodians of our public collections.
H. M. COLVIN.

ROMAN AND NATIVE IN NORTH BRITAIN. Edited by I. A. Richmond.
Pp. x, 174; illust. London and Edinburgh: Nelson. 1958. 18s.

This volume, containing the papers delivered to the Summer School of Scottish historians and archaeologists which met at Dumfries in 1953, is the second in its series of *Studies in History and Archaeology*. Following on *The Problem of the Picts*, containing the papers delivered by Dr Wainwright, Professor K. H. Jackson and other scholars to the preceding Dundee Summer School, it may be hoped that it will extend to a wide public some knowledge of the way in which archaeology, combined with a re-examination of the texts in the light of the new evidence, has revolutionised our knowledge of Britain inside and on the margin of the Roman Empire.

Professor Stuart Piggott contributes an introductory paper on Native Economies and the Roman Occupation, describing their variety in different regions in a manner that would have been quite impossible to the scholars of forty years ago, and incidentally drawing candid and salutary attention to some of the problems of the interpretation of archaeological evidence, and to ways in which, if recklessly interpreted, it could mislead. Messrs John Clarke and John Gillam and Dr K. A. Steer then deal with the impact of the Roman invasions upon native life under the gradually changing conditions of the periods, respectively, down to Hadrian, under Hadrian and the Antonines, and in the third century, including the restoration by Severus. Professor Richmond himself handles The Fourth Century and After, and the transition from the still imposing and vigorous building and tactical developments of the Constantinian Empire to the already sub-Roman slum conditions under which the troops, now a local peasant militia, packed themselves and their wives and families into the patched-up forts of Hadrian's Wall in the days of Theodosius.

Mr Clarke writes with much charm and a vivid sympathy for the harried and conquered Britons, in the early phases; but to a reviewer most familiar with this period, some criticisms occur. Mr Clarke would take Agricola into south-west Scotland already in his second campaign, among the 'estuaries' mentioned in Tacitus's studiously vague narrative. But the estuaries could as well be those of north Lancashire (including Furness); and Tacitus's reference to tribes 'hitherto untouched' (cf. p. 46) refers to the *next* campaign, the great sweep to mid-Scotland. On the ever-fascinating problem of locating Mons Graupius, Mr Clarke still has a lingering fondness for the Raedykes (Stonehaven) position (p. 51); but this theory, now that Inchtuthil is securely dated to Agricola's time (and if so,

surely before his last winter 83-84), is, it is not too much to say, untenable. The battle was fought late in the season, and it cannot have taken all summer to sweep the country from the Tay to Stonehaven. Moreover, though it was too late, after the battle, for extensive mopping-up operations, it was *not* too late to send the fleet, with troops on board, up to Orkney, making landings on the way. The battle must have been fought far north, near the Moray Firth and the north end of the series of Roman marching-camps now known; on the other hand, hardly as far afield as Inverness (*ibidem*), since Agricola *regained* contact with his fleet in the territory of the Boresti after the battle. Nor does the tract of moor by Raedykes offer a position in which the British lines could be seen rising tier above tier, as Tacitus says, i.e. on a steep hill, rising from level ground where chariots and cavalry could operate.

Of particular interest in later periods is the theory, here worked out in detail, of how the Romans cultivated relations with friendly tribes, especially the Votadini and Damnonii, thereby establishing buffer-states after the withdrawal of their regular forces from southern Scotland. Mr Gillam discerns already by 197 'a dim foreshadowing of Gododdin and Strathclyde'. These are the circumstances in which some people troubled to spell out the Roman alphabet in the unlikely surroundings of Traprain Law (p. 119); and when St. Ninian advanced from the Solway to the conversion of the southern Picts, 'history in different form had repeated itself' (p. 130).

The book ends with an exemplary study and translation by Richmond of 'The Ancient Geographical Sources for Britain' north of Hadrian's Wall (not only north of the Cheviot, as the title on p. 131 says).

The meticulous may be glad to know that, in the entry 'Halton, Chesters', in the list of *vici* on p. 117, the first comma is in order; the reference is to the two sites (Roman Murrum and Cilurnum). The editing and book-production are of the highest order. The plates and maps add much to the vividness and lucidity of the text; and the price, by modern standards, is most moderate.

A. R. BURN.

THE BOOK OF THE OLD EDINBURGH CLUB. Vol. XXIX. Pp. viii, 209. Edinburgh: printed for the Members of the Club. 1956.

The latest volume of the Old Edinburgh Club creditably maintains a fine tradition. There are four principal contributions: 'The Minutes of the Merchant Maiden Hospital', by the Rev. Edwin S. Towill; 'The Tron Church', by Miss Marguerite Wood; 'Notes on Rebuilding in Edinburgh in the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century', by Miss Helen Armet; and 'Extracts from an Edinburgh Journal 1823-1833', edited by D. G. Moir. To complete the volume there

are shorter notes on 'The Society of Bowlers', and 'A Sentence of the Bailies, 24th August 1738', both by Miss Armet, and on 'The Loyal Edinburgh Spearman', by Major H. P. E. Pereira.

Mr Towill's article on the Merchant Maiden Hospital, based on the Minutes in the possession of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh is the longest and most important in the volume. It is an extraordinary thing that the history of this famous school has not been fully written before now. A glance at *Whitaker's Almanack* for 1956 reveals that of the principal girls' schools in the United Kingdom, only six date from before 1700 and, of these, the Mary Erskine School (the direct descendant of the Merchant Maiden Hospital, though changed in function and name) is the only Scottish one. Little is known about the founder, Mary Erskine, Mrs Hair, but she must have been a remarkable character, for it is not given to many to found two hospitals, which in one form or another have lasted 250 years and more. In the preceding volume of the Club Mr Towill gave the story of the Trades Maiden Hospital (which alone of the old Edinburgh hospitals remains today as a residential establishment) founded by the Incorporation of Trades with the help of Mary Erskine in 1704. When, in 1694, she founded the Merchant Maiden Hospital with the assistance of the Merchant Company, she strove to do for the daughters of indigent members of the Company what George Heriot had done for fatherless boys who were sons of freemen of the city. She 'mortified 10,000 merks for the maintenance of burgh children of the female sex', and the Company set up a 'fund for the lasses' to supplement this sum. (Incidentally, it is a pity that Mr Towill does not convert all his money references to sterling.) The Company deserves the praise Mr Towill gives it for raising the necessary money, but perhaps he should have added a word in honour of Sir James McLurg, one time Dean of Guild, who, according to Heron's *History of the Merchant Company*, was mainly responsible for directing their effort. When he died, McLurg left money to the Hospital, and also money to found and endow a charity school in the city. He is one of Edinburgh's forgotten benefactors.

Mr Towill describes the various habitations of the Hospital, from its unpretentious beginnings in the Company's Hall in the Cowgate to the first hospital in Bristo; then to Lauriston in 1818, and finally to the present buildings in Queen Street. Most interesting too is his account of life in the Hospital among the forty girls, matron, and assistants. While the character of the matron was probably of the greatest importance in deciding whether hospital life was to be beneficial or not, the system of control by the governing body was also important, and the Merchant Company in this respect was well guided. The governors consisted of members of the Company, of the Town Council, the city ministers, two persons of the name of Erskine, and the Treasurer, and they appointed panels of visitors to

superintend the running of the Hospital. The extracts quoted from the reports of these visitors illustrate the concern of the governors in the food, clothing, and health of the girls as well as in their intellectual and religious training. Problems of discipline inevitably rose in the restricted surroundings of the Hospital. In the early days, Mr Towill says, the staff were 'homely and practical rather than highly educated', and the training they gave was simple. The church services at Old Greyfriars when the girls of the Merchant Maiden and Trades Maiden Hospitals were all present occasioned rivalries so great that once at least 'when one hospital sang, the other girls stopped, and remarks were passed about their faces and figures'.

In the course of the eighteenth century a change came over the curriculum. From 1784 visiting masters were employed to teach English, writing, arithmetic and singing. One of the first of these masters, Mr Laurie, published with the approval of the governors a little book on the teaching of English and other subjects which is of particular interest as showing a tendency to prepare the girls to be governesses, and to stress the academic as opposed to the practical side of their training. This process was accelerated in the following century, though even as late as 1834 the Hospital was taking in dressmaking work to be done, whilst 'All the children's clothes, with the exception of the cotton stockings and the plaiting of their bonnets are made and repaired in the House'. By the fifties, however, natural science, French, German and Italian are to be found in the curriculum, and the old Hospital is well on the way to being the famous secondary school it became in 1871.

The article on 'The Tron Church', is the last of many contributions to the Club by Dr Marguerite Wood, whose death in 1955 was a loss to all students of Edinburgh's history. Her ironic humour is delightfully evident in this brief account of how the Tron Church was reluctantly begun at the bidding of Charles I, and finished as cheaply as possible in the reign of Charles II. She points out that the date above the entrance, 1641, has no particular significance, as the building had been begun before that time and was completed much later.

Miss Helen Armet writes on the rebuilding of Edinburgh in the seventeenth century. To replace the older constructions of timber and thatch, the Town Council made rules that future building in the High Street should be of stone. They also suggested the style of building with pillars and arches which is so charming to our eyes.

We know little about the author of the diary from which Mr D. G. Moir has given a selection dealing with the period 1829-33, but he was interested in building, and records the progress of the erection of the Edinburgh Academy and the new High School.

Of the short notes under the general heading of 'Miscellany', Miss Armet provides an interesting account of the Society of Bowlers,

with a list of the rules of 1769. She also reports an amusing sentence 'by the Bailies, 24th August, 1738', in which a termagant fish-wife who had committed a riot against a servant of the Professor of Hebrew was condemned to stand at the Mercat Cross for an hour, 'with her head uncovered and two dozen of herrings hinging about her neck and a labell on her breast write in Capitall Letters denoting her crime'. Members of the Edinburgh Home Guard who remember the issue of pikes in 1940 will be particularly interested in H. P. E. Pereira's note on their predecessors, 'The Loyal Edinburgh Spearmen' of the years 1803-8.

ALEXANDER LAW.

THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS—A SHORT HISTORY. By W. R. Kermack. Pp. 160. Edinburgh: W. & A. K. Johnston and G. W. Bacon. 1957. 9s. 6d.

A concise, impartial history of the Scottish Highlands and Islands at a popular price was badly needed; Mr Kermack has written a book which will be of great value to the general reader, who wants a clear account of the complicated and tortuous history of this part of Scotland. The five maps included are also helpful. The space available (157 pages), however, is not sufficient for the adequate treatment of such important related subjects as religion, Gaelic printed, oral and MS. literature, and folklore.

So far as the religious history of the Highlands and Islands is concerned, documents of fundamental importance, including the reports of the Irish Franciscans and the Minutes of the S.P.C.K. (which, incidentally, reveal the existence of Catholic schools in parts of the Highlands), still remain unpublished, though there is hope that the Latin text of the Franciscan reports will soon appear in Ireland. The poorly supported Franciscans and Vincentians would have been only too glad if they could have felt that 'the Papacy had no intention of surrendering' the Highlands and Islands: but in fact Rome was far more interested in the recovery of the Lowlands, where political power in Scotland lay, and the Highland mission, the hardships of which were a severe discouragement to all but the most devoted of missionaries, was starved.

The foundation of the S.P.C.K. in Scotland in 1709 can hardly be unrelated to the publication of Martin Martin's books on St. Kilda and the Western Isles a few years previously. These must have aroused Presbyterian readers to the fact that the Reformation of the Isles was very far from perfect or complete. Martin is such an important source of information about the Isles in the seventeenth century that it is very surprising that no critical edition of his books has ever appeared, nor has any attempt been made to separate the facts therein from the hearsay. For instance, Martin only got the

often-quoted story of the Lewismen's libations to 'Shony' at second-hand thirty-two years after the custom had been suppressed. Some kind of supporting evidence is really necessary before such a story can be accepted as authoritative.

While the author is to be congratulated upon compressing so much into so little space, it would certainly be a good thing if a second edition of the book could be expanded by about fifty pages to give fuller treatment of these matters, and above all to take into account Highland oral traditions and folklore.

The reviewer takes this opportunity to remark that the Introduction to *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five*, which is referred to here, is out of date: it was written before it was possible to consult the S.P.C.K. Minutes in the National Register House. His present views on the background of the '45 are contained in part II of the last edition of *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*.

J. L. CAMPBELL.

BOSWELL IN SEARCH OF A WIFE 1766-1769. Edited by Frank Bradby and Frederick A. Pottle. Pp. xxix, 425. London: Heinemann. 1957. 30s.

The present instalment of the 'trade' edition of the papers of James Boswell is less interesting than some of the preceding volumes. Yet during the years 1766-9 Boswell, as the editors point out, 'became a lawyer, wrote a fine, popular, and influential book, and got married. These were his marvellous years' (p. xi). It may be suggested that they overstate their client's case. Was it much of an achievement for the eldest son of a judge to become a lawyer at the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven especially when, in his conduct of his first criminal case, he displayed, in the opinion of the editors, such zeal and imprudence as made it practically certain he would never attain to a commanding position in his profession (p. 13)? Who now reads or cares about his *Account of Corsica*? Even if we agree that at the time of publication it was a skilful piece of journalism, it was completely without influence on the men who controlled British foreign policy. They cared nothing for the Corsicans in spite of Pitt's grandiloquent and pompous phrases and did not even make any serious protest over what they did care about—growing French strength in the western Mediterranean. The book succeeded only in giving Boswell the character of an author which he coveted and allowed his repellent exhibitionism to manifest itself in a more than normally ludicrous way at Garrick's Shakespeare festival in September 1769. He did, however, achieve marriage with a woman who was much too good for him and this only because the lady allowed her love for cousin Jamie Boswell to overcome her better judgment. Apart from Boswell's curious courting of this lady, the main interest of this volume is

incidental. Boswell supped in 1769 on capercailzie, already described by Pennant as a rare bird (p. 257). Paoli advocated alliance between Britain and Austria (p. 321) since he still considered Austria the rival of France. Boswell, acting as public relations officer for the Corsicans, repeatedly inserted false intelligence in the newspapers and tried to stir up popular agitation, much as John Lind tried to do for the Poles a few years later. What amused me most, however, was the sweeping condemnation of the whole population of Glasgow by Boswell's youngest brother David. 'The place itself' he wrote (p. 106) 'is really pretty, and were the present inhabitants taken out and drowned in the ocean, and others with generous souls put in their stead, it would be an honour to Scotland.'

The editing is admirable, if not entirely impeccable, e.g. the price received by the historian Robertson for his Charles V was not £4,500 (p. 179) but £3,500 with the promise of another £500 in case of a second edition; the name Burnaby, correctly spelt in the text, appears as Bauraby in the index; and the comment on Robert Macqueen, Lord Braxfield, seems rather one-sided (p. 126).

D. B. HORN.

SCOTLAND BEFORE HISTORY. By Stuart Piggott and Keith Henderson. Pp. viii, 112; 32 illustrations. Edinburgh: Nelson. 1958. 15s.

A new and useful form of archaeological literature is emerging in which authoritative and critical attempts at synthesis are presented unencumbered by the paraphernalia of archaeological method on the one hand, and by the avoidance of popular archaeological journalism on the other. Such a book is this elegant short work at the hands of Professor Stuart Piggott and Mr Keith Henderson, and it merits the attention of the educated Scots reader in general as well as the student of Scots history, of whatever age, in particular. Its appeal should, indeed, be far wider, and although not written for archaeologists, it contains much of profit for them in a widening of outlook, and in its demonstration of the interpenetration of natural environment, material culture, and the first faint reverberations coming from lands that were already within the civilised, historical, world.

This is archaeology practised as an historical discipline, a summing up of the material evidence for a larger objective, one explanatory in some degree of the pattern of human existence that extended through the centuries of written history, and that is still manifest in aspects of modern Scottish life.

The authors, in word and closely related drawing, survey the ascertainable sequences of human settlement and achievement in Scotland from the first opening of the region on the retreat of the ice down to the complex political and cultural position existing in the time of Agricola. Each of the five parts of this 'long essay' have their

continuing relevance to Scotland as we know it, but the third part makes perhaps the most fascinating reading, and the recognition of Scotland's place, however remote, in the trading and cultural world of the High Bronze Age of Europe, emanating from such centres as Mycenae, must come as a revelation to many readers.

Mr Henderson's thirty-two charming and evocative illustrations should set a new example for co-operation between author and artist. The archaeological objects are faithfully portrayed, and the reconstructed settings, as in the case of the interior of a Skara Brae house, or the appearance and clothing of a young man holding a bronze dagger, are both restrained and informed. Specially praiseworthy are the illustrations of animals, birds, and plants, important but seldom visualised, and those of some of the more impressive monuments, stone circles, cairns, and brochs, that still give character to the Scottish countryside. The connection between the wolverines and the sword in the illustration on p. 105 may not seem quite clear until the hands of the dead warrior are observed under the foliage. If any criticism is necessary it might perhaps be directed to the whale with curled tail (or do they do this when dead?), and to the groom who hopes to catch a rearing horse by means of a bit and reins but with no head-stall to keep the bit in the animal's mouth when caught.

As a small masterpiece in range of thought and expression, I would make this book required reading for undergraduates, and would expect to find it on the shelves of every literate house in Scotland.

T. G. E. POWELL.

BARON HUME'S LECTURES 1786-1822. Volume VI. Edited and annotated by G. Campbell H. Paton. Pp. xviii, 412. Edinburgh: The Stair Society. 1957.

The lectures which are printed in this—the sixth and final—volume, have been taken from the original MSS. of the lectures, in the library of the Faculty of Advocates, and comprise the remainder of Part V of the course—Actions—together with the law of Diligence. They were prepared for delivery by Baron Hume to the Scots Law Class during the Session 1821-2, the last year of his tenure of the Chair of Scots Law in the University of Edinburgh, and were read to the class by Mr John Hay Forbes, Advocate.

This final volume of the Stair Society edition contains a biography of Baron Hume written by the Editor. It is interesting to learn from it that the class fee, which was paid to, and retained by, the Professor, was three guineas from the time when Hume began until the Town Council in 1812 authorised an increase to four guineas; and that the salary attached to the Chair was £100 plus the class

fees. It is, however, sad to be told that the future Lord Jeffrey groaned under what he considered to be 'Hume's elaborate dullness', and that Thomas Carlyle 'did not, at first, take to the class'.

It is clear from this and the five preceding volumes that Baron Hume prepared his lectures very carefully and in considerable detail, and that he cited a great many authorities as illustrations of general principles. In the case of *Auld v. Hay* (1880) 7 Rettie 663, dealing with the effect of the positive prescription in serving to construe an ambiguous title by reference to the possession had under that title for the prescriptive period, Lord Deas at page 673 said 'When I was a student of law now some sixty years ago, under Professor, (afterwards Baron) Hume, I am very sure that if there had been a case in which a title followed by prescriptive possession had been held open to enquiry simply because it might have been read in two ways, he would have known of it, and, if he had known of such a case, he would undoubtedly have mentioned it, *which, from my notes I can say he did not do.*' This is a wonderful tribute from a former student to a professor, and shows the high estimation in which Baron Hume was held by his students, and the degree of authority which they attached to his lectures. On reading the lectures today, one is not surprised that this was so.

This volume, like its predecessors, is beautifully printed, and the Editor has taken an immense amount of trouble in the arrangement and annotation.

G. A. M.

TRUSTIE TO THE END: THE STORY OF THE LEITH HALL FAMILY.
By Henrietta Leith-Hay and Marion Lochhead. Pp. xii, 152.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd. 1957. 15s.

Public interest in Scotland has in recent years been turned to the estate and castellated mansion of Leith Hall in central Aberdeenshire since they were gifted to the National Trust by Mrs Leith-Hay, whose husband and son were the last of a long line of lairds. The family has traditionally been traced back to William Leith, a Provost of Aberdeen in the fourteenth century, and visitors to the house can now see numerous relics of the lairds of the last two centuries. Leith Hall also contains a miscellany of old family papers and, on the basis of a selection of these made by Mrs Leith-Hay, a story has been constructed by Miss Lochhead around the more interesting of the personalities who have been connected with the property.

A stirring tale is told of the John Leith who appears to have been killed in a drunken duel in Aberdeen in 1763 and of the efforts of his widow to obtain revenge and to bring up her fatherless children, two of whom afterwards became generals in the Napoleonic Wars. Later lairds served as young men in the Peninsular, Crimean and

Indian Mutiny Wars, and, in consequence, much of the wider interest of this book lies in the extracts given from their letters or their later reflections about the various campaigns in which they were involved. An attractive portrait is drawn also of the laird of the neighbouring estate of Rannes, Andrew Hay, a giant of some seven feet two inches, who suffered eighteen years of exile for his support of Prince Charles in 1745, and who then returned home to become the benefactor that in 1789 saved the extravagant Leiths from ruin. An important condition was that they should assume his surname to their own. It is typical of such families that some lairds should occasionally cut a minor dash in politics or society in London, that others should concentrate more on the local affairs of the county, and that several connections with Canada and Australia fall to be recorded in the mid-nineteenth century. It is also characteristic that a family which once sent its sons to be educated at the Aberdeen Grammar School or Elgin Academy has in more recent times favoured Eton tempered with Gordonstoun.

This is not a ponderous work. The many extracts from the family papers come mostly from very readable letters, and they are strung together with pleasantly imaginative and shrewd comments which make for a pleasant tale. It is, however, the disadvantage of such a method that the additional information which is to be found in other kinds of record for full biographies of these lairds has not been gathered here, and so the resultant picture is necessarily patchy and incomplete. A certain lack of exactitude about dates and in descriptions of the various properties held by the family at different times leads to some confusion which the absence of an index does nothing to clear up. Indeed, though this book provides much that is new and fascinating about a family that has now come into the public eye with its pending demise, there is still room for a complementary study of the estates they held and of the charmingly complex house they gradually built for themselves in properly thrifty fashion from 1650 onwards, if the personalities sketched in this book are to be satisfactorily matched to their background.

DONALD E. R. WATT.

ALEXANDER GORDON, M.D. OF ABERDEEN, 1752-1799. By Ian A. Porter. Pp. xii, 92. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd (Aberdeen University Studies). 1958. 12s. 6d.

The history of medicine, too often neglected by the general historian, is not only a basis of modern medicine and a link between medicine and the humanities. It is also an important aspect of national and social history which illuminates many obscure historical problems. Such facts as these are well demonstrated in this account

of the life and work of a neglected and almost forgotten Scottish medical pioneer.

It was Alexander Gordon who first proved the contagious nature of puerperal fever, the cause of the tragic deaths of many mothers before the days of bacteriology and antiseptics. In describing Gordon's curious and all too brief career, Dr Porter begins with an account of Scotland in the eighteenth century, and of the vast improvements in the health, learning and prosperity of the country which were then taking place. It was a stimulating atmosphere for any investigator.

Born at Miltown of Drum, Aberdeenshire, in 1752, Alexander Gordon received his medical education from Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Leyden. After five years of service as a naval surgeon, he studied under Dr Thomas Denman of London, who had succeeded Dr William Hunter as the leading obstetrician of his time. Gordon then returned to Aberdeen, where he acquired a large practice, especially in midwifery, and commenced the investigations which led to his discovery. In 1795, he published *A Treatise on the Epidemic Puerperal Fever of Aberdeen*, in which he expounded his view that the fever arose 'from local contagion and not from anything noxious in the atmosphere'. The book so aroused the indignation of the midwives of Aberdeen that the author decided to leave the city and to resume his former work as a naval surgeon, a disappointed man. He died four years later, in the home of his twin brother James, from tuberculosis, at the age of forty-seven, and he was buried in St. Nicholas' Churchyard, Aberdeen.

Thus his career resembles that of Ignaz Semmelweis of Budapest who, more than half a century later, independently repeated Gordon's discovery. Semmelweis was ignored or discredited in his day, and died insane, although he, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, are now regarded as the pioneers who first drew attention to the contagious nature of puerperal fever, while the prior work of Gordon is forgotten. Scotland, not Hungary, nor America, was the home of this discovery.

Dr Porter has done well to rescue from oblivion this Aberdeen obstetrician who so well deserves recognition. 'Let us give Gordon the credit which is his due. He erred in only one respect—that his outstanding contribution was made too soon in history'.

The book is well produced, and illustrated by seven plates which depict written or printed work. Apparently no portrait of Gordon is known. It is a valuable and well written contribution, not only to the history of obstetrics and of the doctrine of contagion, but also to the history of Scottish Medicine, with special reference to Aberdeen. The bibliography mentions sixty-four works of reference, but unfortunately there is no index.

DOUGLAS GUTHRIE.

WILLIAM HAMILTON OF BANGOUR, POET AND JACOBITE. By Nelson S. Bushnell. Pp. xii, 164. Aberdeen University Press. 1957. 15s.

In this charming and scholarly little work we have, for the first time, an adequate account, and an evaluation both on the historical and on the literary side, of one of the most interesting pioneer figures in the Scottish literary Renaissance of the eighteenth century. The fact that it is written by a distinguished American professor of English gives the book an independence of outlook and a freshness of judgment not always found when Scottish writers handle Scottish subjects.

The author displays a remarkable grasp of the political situation and cultural *milieu* of Scotland in general, and of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood in particular, during the extremely interesting and pregnant period between the 'Fifteen and the 'Forty-five. Here and there one detects a hasty generalisation. Thus it is far from true to say that 'the Highlands were Roman Catholic', and a considerable exaggeration to claim that 'every solvent Scot had a stake in the Darien Scheme'. The statement that in Edinburgh 'everybody married early, lived long and hard, and died in his liveliest eighties' fails to accord with what is known of the vital statistics of the eighteenth century. But in the main Professor Bushnell's picture of Scottish society at the period is as true as it is vivid.

His account of how the poet became involved in the Jacobite rising, and of the part he played therein, represents a substantial contribution to the record of the 'Forty-five. Of his literary criticism and bibliographical investigation of Hamilton's writings, published and unpublished, it is sufficient, in a historical review, to say that it is both sound and stimulating, and based to a large extent on unpublished materials. Scottish scholarship is much indebted to Professor Bushnell for this valuable work.

W. D. S.

ANDREW MYLLAR: A Short Study of Scotland's First Printer. By Thomas Rae. Pp. viii, 22. Greenock: The Signet Press. 1958. Paper covers, 7s. 6d. 25 copies specially bound in cloth boards, 15s. 6d.

This is a charming little book to look at and to handle, the most ambitious yet produced by hand by Mr Rae at the Signet Press. In every physical aspect—types, paper, press-work, binding—it graces this month of April 1958 when we celebrate the completion of 450 years of the practice of printing in Scotland. Myllar's famous device, one of the best ever executed, is well reproduced as a line block within the book and as a blind stamp on the cover; and it is interesting to see also the adaptation of this device now in use by Mr Liam Millar at the Dolmen Press, Dublin.

But Mr Rae's matter is poor and cannot fairly be described as a 'study'. It is copied largely from Dickson and Edmond's *Annals of Scottish Printing* (1890), with only occasional use of later work, and it is not even very well copied. For instance, why say that 'Claudin assumed that the book [Garlandia] was produced at Rouen, as it was found in that area'? Claudin considered, on typographical grounds, which Rouen press might have printed that book and the *Expositio Sequentiarum*, and since his time this problem has been settled as far as it is ever likely to be. Then there is the question of the two pieces following the nine Chepman and Myllar Prints. The tenth ('The Tua Mariit Wemen' etc.) was printed—whether in Scotland or abroad we know not—with the larger type used by Myllar's Rouen printer, while the eleventh (*Robin Hood*) was printed by an entirely different printer, in the Netherlands. These are matters of fact, not of opinion. Yet Mr Rae asserts that both pieces were printed abroad and 'may be attributed to Myllar's foreign press', by which he means the Rouen printer who had worked for Myllar and may have trained him. Later he forgets all about this and implies that 'The Tua Mariit Wemen' was printed in Edinburgh, for, he tells us, 'six poems in the "Southgait" tracts are attributed to Dunbar', and these can only be the three known to have been printed in the Southgait, together with the two or three contained in the same tract as 'The Tua Mariit Wemen' itself. It is incredible that anyone should have ventured to study Myllar without examining the famous and unique volume of Prints in the National Library of Scotland. When I described it in 1950, I hinted that the binding was weak. The leaves have since been inlaid in mounts of a different size and rebound in white leather, and the old cover and mounts so faithfully described after me by Mr Rae have been preserved apart as curiosities.

It is perhaps superfluous to catalogue minor errors and misunderstandings, such as 'Dixon' (of Dickson and Edmond), 'heresay' for 'hearsay', and the unauthorised use of 'pressmark' in the sense of a printer's device. The list of nine 'principal sources of early printing in Scotland' contains four or five titles that are little to the purpose and omits one—James MacLehose, *The Glasgow University Press* (1931)—that is indispensable.

There is no reason why Mr Rae should not have borrowed. He would have been better to borrow more extensively if he could have done it more intelligently. When he transcribes (not without error) the colophon of 'The maying and disport of chaucer', he gives no hint that the work is Lydgate's, no hint of why this author was so important in Scotland:

O morall Gower and Ludgate laureate,
Your sugurit lippis and tongis aureate
Bene to our eris cause of grete delyte.

He tells us nothing about the other poetical tracts or about their place in Scottish literature. (What a superb text we should have lost if *The Golden Targe* had survived only through Bannatyne and Maitland and not in Chepman and Myllar's print!) There is no mention of the folio *Wallace* (which must have been a handsome book in its unfragmented state) or of the prose *Porteous of Nobleness*, a translation from Alain Chartier and one of the beginnings of that tradition that was to embrace Urquhart and Charles Scott Moncrieff, and Mr Douglas Young's rendering of *Le Cimetière Marin*.

WILLIAM BEATTIE.

THE CHURCH IN THE ISLE OF MAN. By Anne Ashley. Pp. 28. London and York: St. Anthony's Press. (St. Anthony's Hall Publications, No. 19). 1958. 3s. 6d.

The general features of the church in the Isle of Man are described by Miss Anne Ashley in the most recent pamphlet to come from the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York. Jocelin of Furness tells us that the island was converted by St. Patrick who placed there his disciple Germanus, but he also retells the story of the Book of Armagh (eighth century) that Patrick sent one Maughold to Man, where he succeeded the two bishops who welcomed him. At Maughold there was a religious centre as early as the seventh century, while on St. Patrick's Island was the church of that saint and the cathedral dedicated to St. German. Miss Ashley points out the occurrence of bishops in literary sources, the appearance of episcopal staffs on three incised slabs, and the frequent place names Stafflands and Ballaterson (estate of the staff).

Each of the six sheadings of Man has three parishes, except one sheading with two, but each was also divided into treens (Scottish, *tirunga*, *davach*, *ounceland*) of which there were about 176. It is fairly certain that a *keeill* (chapel) existed in every treen, and that the organisation of sheadings, treens and *keeills* is older than that of parishes; according to Professor Marstrander it antedates the Norse conquest of Man. This evidence is all given by Miss Ashley, who draws the quite extraordinary conclusion that 'though, on account of what is known of the Celtic church elsewhere, it is assumed that . . . the whole organisation of the church in Man [was] monastic from the sixth century, there seem to be neither traditions of nor recognisable memorial slabs to individual abbots'. The Manx church certainly had communities of clergy living in *monasteria*, for a papal bull to Rushen abbey (1159) refers to 'the monastery of St. Loec' but it is surely unwise to call these communities monastic without some qualification. Did the clergy of these monasteries serve the *keeills*? If not, the *whole* organisation of the Manx church was not monastic; if they did, then the monasticism had little to do

with the common meaning of that term. The prominence of bishops and absence of abbots further implies that bishops were at times heads of these communities. Were they any different from the colleges of clerks with or without bishops but always without abbots, which were the minsters of the early Anglo-Saxon church?

Loec, Malew, was Moluag, whose church on Lismore became the seat of the Bishop of Argyll. In Argyll too there are many more place-names in *kil-* than there are parishes; in Argyll the bishop had a quarter of parochial revenues as he had in Man until the twelfth century; in Argyll as in Man there is evidence of episcopal elections by diocesan clergy gathered in chapter; Bishops Christian (twelfth century) and Simon (1226-48) were Argyllsmen; and of course the diocese of Man was a straggling fringe of islands separated from the medieval region of Argyll by a political treaty of 1098 which bore no relationship to social or ecclesiastical realities. There is much work yet to be done on the Norse-Celtic ecclesiastical organisation of the western seaboard, but the foundation of that work must be a place-name and archaeological survey such as has not yet been attempted.

Miss Ashley discusses episcopal elections, the metropolitan claims of York and Trondhjem, the building of the cathedral, the foundation of Rushen abbey, the archdeacon, sumner and vicar-general, and the highly individual evolution of church courts and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in Man, especially in the post-reformation period. Scottish readers will not find Miss Ashley's references easy to follow up, for the *Manx Society Publications* are all too scarce in this country, but they will find her survey useful, and stimulating in the comparisons it suggests with the remoter Scottish dioceses. We are indebted to the author for a clear and yet concise summary of the evidence on a neglected topic. It has made one reader anxious that Miss Ashley should give us a full history of the church in the diocese of Sodor and Man, for she is obviously master of her material. There are two excellent maps, two illustrations, and an interesting line-drawing of St. Patrick's Island.

ARCHD. A. M. DUNCAN.

A SCOTTISH HISTORY FOR TODAY. By Ian Gould and John Thompson. Book Two. Pp. xvi, 239. London: John Murray. 1958. 8s.

In our notice of Book One, we had occasion to point out the defects and hint at the dangers of its concept of Scottish history against the world background. Unfortunately this second instalment, far from diminishing these dangers, increases them to such an extent that criticism stands at times dumbfounded. It is a curious mixture of 'potted down' modern research into the dark places of Scottish history (with the 'potting' by no means invariably successful) and up-to-the-minute references to 'sputniks' and the need to succour the

underprivileged peoples of Asia and Africa. The intention throughout is laudable, whether from the point of view of teaching good Scottish history or good citizenship; but so far as the Scottish history is concerned the result is unhappy. The method must shoulder a great part of the blame, for it tries to do too much in far too little space, and, as a result, over-condensation at times makes the narrative all but incomprehensible. Surely British, European, and American history are subjects to be taught in their own right, and surely an experienced teacher can relate them *where relevant* to the history of Scotland!

An odd feature of the work is that it has been read, and apparently approved, by Roman Catholic teachers, one of whom at least is in orders. We are also informed that it has been approved by two Presbyterian ministers. If only an Episcopalian had been consulted what an ecumenical 'Nihil Obstat' it could have carried! This, however, raises a serious question: is historical truth, after all, divisible, and need we, especially at the school level, truckle so much to 'points of view', to use the authors' own phrase? The present writer for one would resist such heresy, in words famous in Scottish history, 'to the yondmost'.

As for doubtful interpretations and half-truths they abound, too numerous to be listed *seriatim*. Can John Knox (p. 3) be described as setting up a Presbyterian polity? Again, in what sense, other than being highly born and highly placed, was Archbishop Hamilton 'a great man' (p. 2)? 'Wo worth the Cardinal'; but Beaton, who got short shrift in Book One, was a greater. The entire point of the National Covenant is missed when it is described, (p. 21) as 'a signed statement saying that they would resist to the end any attempt to make Scotland Roman Catholic again'. The National Covenant is not perhaps an easy document to read, but whoever reads it diligently and relates it to its times will find such a description mystifying in its obtuseness.

The same curious mixture of the mistaken and the misunderstood pervades the entire book. When we come to the Restoration we can perhaps guess why the services of an Episcopalian reader were dispensed with, for here the subject is given, in capsule form, pretty much as Wodrow and generations of his glossators have left it. Again, in the narration of events that led up to the Union of 1707, there is no mention of the constitutional settlement at the Revolution, which was probably the most fundamental of all factors. The victor of Sheriffmuir (judging it by its results) was 'Red John of the Battles', the second Duke of Argyll, not 'Red Colin' (p. 37). Other misconceptions have been noted but cannot be included here.

After p. 43 we leave the history of Scotland, and skip blithely round the world with the deft ease of a Phileas Fogg and, like Jules Verne's hero, obtaining only the most fleeting impressions. The whole

criticism of the book is largely this—that these pages might more profitably have been devoted to the history of Scotland. It may be that we are not qualified to pronounce on modern teaching methods; it may be, as a transatlantic reviewer recently remarked in noticing an older type of school text-book on Scottish history, that the 'enfant terrible' of a Scottish schoolboy is a myth. We can only judge a book by its contents; and what boots it that Henry Ford built an automobile empire, and the Wright brothers flew, if John Knox planted Presbyterian kirks and the National Covenant was merely a band against a non-existent threat of popery?

W. FERGUSON.

THE WISEST FOOL IN CHRISTENDOM. By William McElwee. Pp. 296. London: Faber and Faber. 1958. 25s.

The elucidation of the complex character of James VI and I proceeds, though slowly: so full justice may yet be done to the greatest of the Stewart kings.

The present study is a step in this direction. Mr McElwee falls, nevertheless, into an error common to those who measure James's regal insufficiency by the yard-stick of Elizabethan virtues, political and other, the evidence for which, on Mr McElwee's own showing, is very slender. If the determination to be fair to James had been a fraction of that shown in creating the legend of *Good Queen Bess*, we should have had already a more authentic portrait of a man of decent instincts, trying out of these and out of the long unhappy experiences of his youth to do a difficult job according to principles, neither fantastic, in the context of his times, nor unaltruistic, by any reckoning.

Recent biographies have very largely ignored the administration of Scotland after 1603, a task to which James for twenty-three years gave such unremitting and intelligent attention as should completely rebut the charge of his sloth, and count as credit to his industry. Facts are chieftains, and twenty-three years is a testing length of time! His fluent pen was neither idle nor frivolous.

Mr McElwee believes that the 'the problems and trials of governing Scotland receded abruptly into comparative insignificance' after 1603. Accordingly it is not surprising that his references to Scotland are few and are detached from the pattern of a Scottish government which was evolving under the compulsion of new relationships. To draw up an assessment of the king without examining the Scottish evidence is hardly valid or fair. For example, when the author takes the royal visit of 1617 as being merely illustrative of the king's arbitrariness, obstinacy and improvidence¹ he conveys but part of

¹ The deficit (1616-18) on Ordinary Scottish revenue was a paltry £700 (Scots) not all of which was chargeable to the visit, the total cost of which, in Scotland, was £200,000 (Scots), a sum more than covered by the taxation of 1616.

the truth. He fails to see in the visit a logical development of antecedent policy.

The duality of kingship created problems in the handling of which the new king of England had to take cognisance of the old king of Scotland. On this novel tight-rope James performed with agility, achieving reasonable solutions, many of which endured to 1707. The conversion of the wild 'Late Borders' into the peaceful 'Middle Shires' of Great Britain was a personal triumph for the king. His extended experiment in Anglo-Scottish free trade failed, but, like his management of the involved economic inter-relations of Scotland, England, France and Holland, it revealed both statesmanship and fiscal wisdom. By such tokens James must be judged.

We should have preferred, in the witness-box, Mar, who knew the king, to Harington, who did not; we would have liked to see the testimony of servants older and worthier than Ker and Villiers. Failure to notice Chancellor Dunfermline and 'Tam o' Cowgate' is inexcusable in a study of their master. Disproportionate concern with the seamier side of the Court, and excessive reliance on the evidence of unbridled contemporary tongues and pens, are faults which distort the true image, despite all Mr McElwee's generous intentions.

W. A. McNEILL.

THE COMMON MAN IN THE GREAT CIVIL WAR. By C. V. Wedgwood. Pp. 24. Leicester: The University Press. 1957. 3s.

This pamphlet is a slightly expanded version of the Fairclough Lecture delivered at Leicester University in 1957. Like all Miss Wedgwood's work it is scholarly and eminently readable. The Civil War is so often treated as a conflict of religious or political principles—between Church and Puritan, Crown and Parliament—that it is refreshing to have this estimate of its effect on the common man. Admitting that the War was in many ways a disaster, Miss Wedgwood enumerates some relieving features. There were no alien troops and no deliberate 'scorched earth' policy, as in the Thirty Years War and as with Montrose and Argyll in Scotland. With the innovations of excise and the 'assessment' (both of which came to be extended to Scotland) a more equitable system of national taxation was introduced. If there was plunder, property was at worst changing hands within the country. While the farmers and small tradesmen lived in fear for their possessions, fresh opportunities opened for the young men who saw service outside their village and county. Not all were fighting for a high ideal. Many on either side, when taken prisoner, were ready to re-enlist with their captors. Among Cromwell's recruits were some whose hope was to recover their Fens from the enclosers. 'It was one of the great achievements of the

English Civil War', she concludes, 'that it gave the Common Man a chance briefly to taste the possibility of power and to speak his mind.' Perhaps, however, she is too prone to regard the common man and the common soldier as identical. On balance the Civil War was hardly a 'Good Thing'.

E. W. M. B-M.

SOURCES OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. Selected and edited by M. Clark. Pp. xii, 622. London: Oxford University Press. 1957. 9s. 6d.

At a time when Australian literature and art are receiving increasing recognition abroad, this 'World's Classics' Double Volume deserves to be welcomed by scholar and general reader alike. The Scottish reader, however, who takes it up in the hope that he will find some evidence of Scotland's mark on Australia will be disappointed. He may find it a little disconcerting to discover, for example, that there is no mention of Thomas Muir; that the Scottish origins of such Australian notables as John Dunmore Lang are not noticed; or that James Edmond of Glasgow who did much to build up the radical *Bulletin*, from which Professor Clark frequently quotes, should not be mentioned.

Yet, in spite of Francis Adams's 1886 assertion that 'the Jehovah (or shall we say the Moloch) . . . of Calvinism is the same in Melbourne as in Edinburgh' (p. 461), it is clear that it is the Irish who have been the outstanding influence on the emergence of Australian national character; and it is significant that they are the only British immigrant group which is indexed. The disappointed Scottish reader must realise, therefore, that Professor Clark is putting the emphasis in the right place.

Indeed, it would be difficult to imagine a better short guide to Australian history. Each document is both readable and representative; the editorial continuity is excellent; brief but pertinent reading-lists are included; and, if the selections end at 1919, all the cardinal elements in the Australian pattern are revealed. *Sources of Australian History* ought to be made compulsory reading for all emigrants.

GEORGE SHEPPERSON.

The papers published in the *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. xii, Part II, range from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth; but this comparatively narrow span in time is offset by a wide variety of content.

Dr Gordon Donaldson makes a valuable contribution under the heading 'Inter-Diocesan and Inter-Provincial Communication before and after the Reformation'. When judicial proceedings in one diocese could not be concluded without reference to persons belonging to

another, the vehicle of communication was the supplication *vicissitudinis causa*, which was used between equals. For a brief period after the Reformation a phraseology modelled on this traditional supplication remained in use, as when one kirk-session requested another to cite witnesses. The international use of this instrument raised more serious problems, and Dr Donaldson, by recounting the case of a Scots minister whose wife ran away to England, illustrates both a stage in the disruption of ecclesiastical unity and the fraternal attitude of the Scots Church to the English in the immediate post-Reformation period.

Robert Walker, colleague of Hugh Blair in St. Giles and, in effect, spiritual director to that earnest evangelical, Lady Glenorchy, is the subject of an interesting sketch by Principal Hugh Watt; while the Rev. Duncan Shaw performs a similar office for Thomas Livingston, a Scots ecclesiastic who was one of the earliest students of St. Andrews University and took a prominent part in the protracted deliberations of the Council of Basel.

The Rev. Dr Arthur Fawcett devotes the central part of a paper on Scottish Lay Preachers in the Eighteenth Century to a group of Scotsmen who were outstanding in early Methodism, among them Alexander Mather who was the first minister ordained by John Wesley for service at home.

Under the title 'Some Records of Dumbarton Presbytery' the Rev. Dr John Kilpatrick gives details of detective work on problems raised by the Formula Book of the Presbytery. Several interesting points emerge, among them the anomaly that this Presbytery apparently for a hundred years presented its ministers and probationers with a formula to sign other than that prescribed by the Assembly of 1711, despite an Act of Assembly in 1726 instructing all who had not signed the 1711 formula to do so. In a useful appendix Dr Kilpatrick gives a list of the extant volumes of Presbytery Minutes with dates.

On p. 84, line 7 from the foot, there is a slip. Walker ministered in Edinburgh and Leith for thirty-seven years, but his ministry in St. Giles lasted only twenty-nine years.

S. M.

Three important articles in the *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 1956-7 (Third Series, vol. xxxv), are devoted to Edward Balliol. Mr C. A. Raleigh Radford writes on Balliol's Manor House on Hestan Island, Dr R. C. Reid gives a summary of Balliol's career together with a provisional list of his *acta*, and Mr Bruce Webster writes on the English Occupations of Dumfriesshire in the Fourteenth Century. Other valuable and interesting articles include a note on a long cist cemetery excavated at Terally (the first to be found in this part of

Scotland—a good distribution map is provided), and an analysis of the Assessor's Schedules for the Window Tax in Dumfriesshire, 1748-98.

In *Studies presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Oxford University Press, 1957), Professor T. F. T. Plucknett, writing on 'The Union and the Tests', demonstrates that the requirement of communicating in the Church of England had not been imposed on members of the English Parliament before 1707 and consequently was not imposed on Scots after the Union. The only religious tests required of members of Parliament (by the statute 30 Charles II, st. 2, c. 1) were 'the taking of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and the subscription of disbelief in sundry religious dogmas'.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE

The *Agricultural History Review*, Vol. vi, Part II, contains an important and valuable article by Shimon Applebaum on 'Agriculture in Roman Britain'.

The *Report of Proceedings* of the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine contains an article by Dr. Douglas Guthrie on 'The Influence of the Leyden School upon Scottish Medicine'.

Scottish Studies, Vol. ii, Part II, contains two articles of interest to historians—'The Harrow in Scotland', by Ian Whitaker, and 'Tidal Nets of the Solway', by Werner Kissling.

The *English Historical Review*, Vol. lxxiv, No. 288 contains a valuable article by Mrs. Jean Scammell on 'Robert I and the North of England'.

Notes and Comments

ACT OF THE HEAD COURT: ELGIN-FORRES ELECTION—12 OCTOBER 1612. Illustrative of the ambiguity to be found in the surviving fragments of Scottish constitutional procedure is the record of the electoral proceedings of the shire court held at Elgin on 18 September 1612.

The manuscript,¹ which is full and circumstantial, refers (a) to an association of 'the prouest and bailieis of Burrouis' with the prelates, lay magnates and other freeholders of the sheriffdom in the choice of 'Robert Innes of that Ilk as onlie [shire] commissioner' to the parliament, summoned for the following 12 October, and (b) to 'James Rutherford prouest of Elgin' as one of the witnesses validating the transactions of the court and the election of the Laird of Innes.

Two of several possibilities, explanatory of this odd conjunction of electors, stand out.

It is possible to argue that in issuing the precepts the Chancery clerks were using the style of the reign of James III, and that the sheriff of Elgin and Forres, misinterpreting the instruction there to summon 'three or four burgesses', had read it as an obligation upon him to call certain burgesses to participate in the actual election. But the absence of any precept specifically directed to a sheriff at this time must modify the admissibility of this view.

A more likely explanation is, I suggest, to be found in the burgh records of Glasgow—admittedly of a date considerably later than 1612, but not too distant in time to destroy their value as an analogy, if nothing more.

The minutes² in question show clearly that, in respect of extra-burghal lands, Glasgow's right to engage, as a corporate freeholder, in the deliberations of the shire court of Lanark was, from 1660 to 1713, exercised unchallenged, despite the opportunity to contest it which the regulating act of 1681³ could have offered to other, disgruntled freeholders.

May not this seeming anomaly have been fully understood by seventeenth-century parliamentarians as an acceptable and, to them,

¹ MS. Commission to Commissioner to Parliament: Elgin & Forres, 1612 (H.M. Register House).

² See *Extracts Burgh Records of Glasgow—1630-1662*, 456; 1663-1690, 122, 209, 213, 298; 1691-1717, 358, 427, 509, 511. Rait (*Parliaments of Scotland*, 218), in a brief consideration of some of these minutes, would seem to under-value their significance.

³ *A.P.S.*, viii, 353-4.

wholly logical convention of their constitution, requiring neither comment nor criticism, and in it may we not also see the reason why the Elgin act of 18 September 1612, the product of 'lang aduysement and Consultatioun', records no protest by the barons against the presence of a fellow-freeholder, albeit a burgh? The freehold qualification of the burgh of Elgin can scarcely have been in dispute.¹

W. A. McNEILL.

¹ I am told by Mr Harold Tait, Town-Clerk of Elgin, that the city held various lands outwith the burgh bounds; and that these, before 1612, were numerous and probably extensive is apparent from the *Register of the Great Seal* (see *R.M.S.*, 1599-1608, No. 249, and 1620-1633, No. 2226). For one holding—Over Barflattishillis—the *reddendo* in 1578 was in money £7 6s. 8d. with 20 pence augmentation (*R.M.S.*, 1546-1580, No. 2812).



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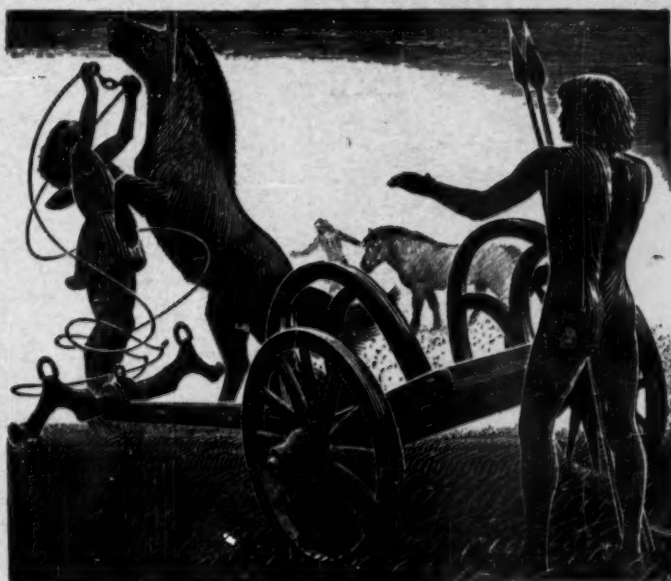
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